EMESIS BLUE

written by

Chad Payne

Based on characters created by Valve Corporation

(c) Fortress Films fortressfilms@hotmail.com

A thunderous crescendo... then:

The **FORTRESS FILMS** logo.

CUT TO:

INT. RESPAWN CHAMBER - UNKNOWN TIME 1

An old military-style promo film flickers to life.

The image of a huge cube-shaped machine with a single slide door fades into view.

The title of this film appears on screen:

HELIX TECHNOLOGIES PRESENTS...

THE RESPAWN MACHINE...

The film flashes to its first scene.

CUT TO:

TRIAL 001...

The door slides open. A man in uniform stands in the chamber.

Subtitles appears in the lower third:

"It’s eternity in there!"

The man drops DEAD to the floor.

CUT TO:

TRIAL 002...

The door opens again. Another man in a different uniform.

"My eyes hurt."

C.U. -- *The man’s eyes are missing.*

CUT TO:

TRIAL 003...

The door opens. A man stands there wordlessly -- *shaking violently.*

The film SPLUTTERS with static.

(CONTINUED)

CUT TO:

TRIAL 004...

The door does not open. Blood spills from under the shutter.

Something POUNDS the door from the other side.

Screaming.

SMASH CUT TO MAIN TITLE

"EMESIS BLUE"

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN

Thursday...

October 31, 1968...

7:57pm...

EXT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EVENING 2

POV: Descending down a long flight of stairs towards a door marked **'MEDICAL'**.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 3

The table is buried under all sorts of pill bottles; anti-psychotics, anti-depressants and sleeping tablets. The table suddenly SHUDDERS.

DR. FRITZ LUDWIG lies back in his chair with his eyes closed and his mouth hanging open. He CONVULSES, his muscles TWITCHING RIGIDLY.

EXT. DUMP SITE - NIGHTMARE 4

A huge dump truck pulls up at the mouth of an enormous pit filled with disgusting muddy water.

The hulking trailer tips over with a mechanical whir. Several BODIES tumble out of it, some with severed limbs, all falling into the water, SPLASHING, sinking like stones; into the darkness below.

INT. DARK SEWER - NIGHTMARE 5

An impossibly long waste tunnel with no visible source of light. The tunnel contains about a foot of water, piled with dozens of CORPSES.

As the POV crawls through this horror, we see a FIGURE up ahead; a CLOAKED MAN. A RED LIGHT suddenly turns on, and at once, all the dead bodies begin to RISE, all dragging themselves toward the POV with HUGE WHITE EYES.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - EVENING 6

COLD SWEATS perspire down Fritz's face. He GASPS for air in quick, successive heaves.

His eyes SNAP open. Even awake, he is unable to move. He SHAKES uncontrollably, fixated on the office door. Two luminous WHITE EYES are looking back at him.

The door SLOWLY SWINGS OPEN. A LARGE SHADOW OF A DARK FIGURE emerges from behind the wall, turning its deformed head to face the horrified Doctor.

It APPROACHES, like DEATH, extending a CLAWED HAND. An ANGULAR SHADOW passes over Fritz's face, frozen in shock.

Time itself seems to stand still, until--

VOICE (O.S.)
Hey, Doc!

A hand flicks the light switch on.

The dark figure in the room disappears. It is immediately replaced by the beaming face of SCOUT, who's struggling to open the door through a stack of cardboard boxes. The entire office itself is a scattered mess.

Fritz grips the arms of his chair and takes several deep breaths.

Sleep paralysis. Again.

He turns his head back to look at the clock. 8pm.

SCOUT
I know it's late but... mind if I ask ya something?

Fritz nods.

SCOUT
You ever have bad dreams?

He gets up off his seat and grabs his glasses off a scrap of newspaper on the desk.

We see the front page:

"JULES ARCHIBALD KIDNAPPED" *- top headline, featuring a headshot of a plump man in a blue waistcoat and matching bowler hat.*

"R.E.D. MUNITIONS PLANT RAIDED - WHO IS TO BLAME?"

"MANN CO. STOCK CRASHES - WAS IT SABOTAGE?"

INT. CHECK-UP ROOM - TIME CUT 7

Scout is propped up on a stretcher while Fritz digs into his bag.

FRITZ
Tell me about it.

SCOUT
Well I was in the bathroom. And as I was brushing my teeth, all my teeth started to fall out. There was blood all over the basin -- it was horrible!

Fritz checks out Scout’s teeth with a little mirror, even though he’s not a dentist.

FRITZ
Are you worried about something?

SCOUT
Yeah, actually. You ever get the feeling like you’re being watched?

Fritz catches a glimpse of a shadow moving across the medical screen.

FRITZ
What do you mean?

SCOUT
When I went to bed last night, I could swear there was someone standing outside my window.

FRITZ
Oh don’t be ridiculous. Someone was just passing by.

SCOUT
Doc, I was on the second floor.

FRITZ
(pausing)
Have you spoken to your mother about this?

SCOUT
She says it’s all in my head.

Fritz puts down the mirror.

FRITZ
Well, there’s nothing wrong with your teeth. Here.

He digs into his black bag and pulls out a small blue pill bottle labeled: **"B.L.U. VALIUM"**.

FRITZ
Take one of these tonight. They should help.

SCOUT
Come on, Doc. I don’t need this stuff.

FRITZ
I think you do, Scout. This doesn’t seem normal.

SCOUT
You sound like my mother.

He takes the pills and goes to move off the stretcher, wincing.

SCOUT
Help me out here.

Fritz gets up off his stool and helps Scout to his feet.

FRITZ
She must be thrilled you’re moving back in with her.

SCOUT
After being laid off? Are you kiddin’ me? I’m gonna sue the hell out of BLU for what they did to me.

FRITZ
You wouldn’t be the first.

SCOUT
Doc, if they ever hit you with somethin’, you hit back twice as hard. You hear me?

FRITZ
It’s getting late. Come on, I’ll give you a ride.

As they go to leave, a box of VHS tapes suddenly tips over behind them, scattering all over the floor. They both spin around.

SCOUT
Jeez, you got a whole video store in there?

They go to clean up. Scout picks up one in particular.

We see that it’s labeled with a large capital **’M’**.

FRITZ
Forget about it. Come on, before it gets dark.

Scout takes the tape and hides it behind his back.

They walk out through the double doors. Fritz suddenly hears RAPID FOOTSTEPS coming from behind him.

He spins around, only to find no one there at all.

(pause)

He takes one last look before ushering Scout out the door.

FADE OUT

CHAPTER ONE: GRAVEYARD SHIFT

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. PARKED CAR - NIGHT 8

Gloomy night in the pouring rain, on a dodgy street corner.

We see SOLDIER looking out the window of the passenger seat of a car he couldn’t afford. He scans the street with bloodshot eyes; clearly he hasn’t slept in days.

He looks up at a massive billboard overhead:

"RE-ELECT JULES ARCHIBALD FOR GOVERNOR OF NEW MEXICO"

Something moves in the background, between the street lights. Soldier stares plainly at what appears to be a man, standing underneath the dim bulb.

The man is staring back at him.

Soldier’s blood freezes. He opens the glove box and pulls out a pack of cigarettes. They look expensive.

He lights one up and puts it to his lips, trying to settle his nerves. He notices something else inside the glove box; a LOADED REVOLVER.

He glances back towards the man standing under the street light, still unmoving, still staring.

He takes the revolver out of the glove box and motions for the door handle. He cocks the hammer, slowly.

C-C-CLICK.

A tense moment passes before the car door opens on the other side. Soldier JUMPS, snapping his head around.

Detective Jacques Murnau sticks his head in the car. He is drenched from head to toe.

MURNAU
He’s here, I need my... What the hell are you doing?

Soldier spins around. The man is gone.

MURNAU
Give me that before you hurt yourself.

He takes the gun off him.

SOLDIER
You told me to keep a look out.

MURNAU
I told you to wait in the car.

SOLDIER
Look, what if it’s an ambush?

MURNAU
He’s alone. This shouldn’t take long.

SOLDIER
That ruski’s twice your size.

MURNAU
I just need to make him talk.

SOLDIER
What if he doesn’t?

(beat)

MURNAU
Just keep an eye out for the police.

He shuts the door. Soldier groans, taking another puff of his smoke.

INT. DARK ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS 9

A HUGE MAN in a TIGHT BLACK SUIT and BRIMMED HAT walks in, carrying a BLACK BRIEFCASE.

He checks his watch, as if expecting to meet someone.

A strange sound captures his attention.

SHHHHHH...

Suddenly, Murnau materializes from behind and points a revolver at his back.

THE RUSSIAN
Builders League.

MURNAU
You look lost, comrade; and that suit doesn’t fit you.

THE RUSSIAN
I did not ask for your opinion.

MURNAU
So tell me the facts; who’s the handoff? Who’s your new employer?

THE RUSSIAN
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

He pulls back the hammer on the gun.

C-C-CLICK.

MURNAU
Who kidnapped Archibald? Was it you? You know the price of betrayal, friend. They’ll throw you up against the wall for this.

THE RUSSIAN
(chuckling)
Things are not as black-and-white as you think.

Murnau glances at what The Russian is holding.

MURNAU
What’s in the briefcase?

THE RUSSIAN
It doesn’t concern you.

MURNAU
Hand it over.

THE RUSSIAN
You want my briefcase?

Murnau slowly stretches out his hand.

Out of nowhere, The Russian swings the case around, BASHING Murnau in the nose and knocking the gun out of his hand. He CRIES OUT in pain, hitting the concrete.

The Russian puts down the briefcase. He GRABS Murnau by the front of his shirt and throws him headfirst into a set of garbage cans.

KA-KLANG-G-G!

CUTAWAY TO:

INT./EXT. MURNAU’S CAR - CONTINUOUS 10

Soldier, bored, fiddles with the knobs on the car radio until the static fizzles to life.

OFFICER 189
(through radio)
This is One-Eight-Nine, reporting a five-oh-three at a local cemetery. The vehicle in question is a black hearse.

It’s not a radio at all, but a police scanner.

OFFICER 188
(through radio)
Ten-nine, say again? A black hearse?

OFFICER 189
(through radio)
Ten-four, that is correct.

OFFICER 188
(through radio)
One-Eight-Nine, is this a joke? Who steals a friggin’ hearse at this hour?

Soldier laughs.

OFFICER 188
(through radio)
What, you think that’s funny, One-Eight-Nine?

OFFICER 189
(through radio)
That wasn’t me.

SOLDIER
Oh, crap.

OFFICER 188
(through radio)
Who the hell is that?

Soldier panics and shuts off the scanner.

INTERCUT:

INT. DARK ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS 11

Some empty bottles clatter out of the garbage cans and onto the ground around Murnau. He picks a couple up and LOBS one at The Russian’s head, STRIKING his temple and knocking his hat off his crown. This does little to hurt him as he lumbers menacingly towards Murnau.

He throws another bottle, missing the head entirely and smashing against the wall before he DUCKS a flying left hook from The Russian’s massive arm.

INTERCUT:

INT./EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS 12

Soldier gets out of the car and finishes the cigarette before tossing it.

Just then, a set of HUGE WHEELS roll over it, crushing it into the asphalt. Soldier takes a step back to avoid being run over.

He shrugs off the car as it disappears into the shadows. He glances back to see that the car is actually much larger than he thought. Black, with tinted windows.

It slows with glaring red brake lights before turning the corner...

A-A-AGH!

...A violent cry makes Soldier whip around to face the mouth of the alleyway.

INT. DARK ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS 13

The Russian has Murnau in a powerful one-handed choke hold, off the ground, pinning him against the side of the dumpster. His eyes are practically BULGING out of their sockets, the Russian’s fist crushing his windpipe.

SOLDIER
Hey, Stalingrad!

The Russian turns around to see Soldier pointing the revolver at him.

SOLDIER
Eat this!

(CONTINUED)

BANG! He shoots Stalingrad in the heart. He goes down HARD like a ton of bricks. Murnau clutches his throat and falls against the dumpster.

(beat)

SOLDIER
You’re welcome.

MURNAU
You idiot!

Murnau clambers to his feet. They both stand over the body.

MURNAU
He was our only lead and now he’s dead!

SOLDIER
Oh, so you were just talking?

They hear sirens.

MURNAU
We have to get out of here.

SOLDIER
What about the body?

MURNAU
I left my camera in the car. Fetch it for me. Now.

Soldier goes off. Murnau picks up the briefcase and sets it on the ground, bending down to unfasten the clasps on either side.

He can’t open it.

A sudden chiming noise ahead of him gets his attention at the mouth of the alleyway.

REVERSE SHOT:

A BLACK HEARSE is parked right outside. The driver’s door is wide open.

INT./EXT. MURNAU’S CAR - CONTINUOUS 14

Soldier opens the door and fumbles inside the glove box before pulling out a polaroid camera. He puts the revolver back.

SOLDIER
(mumbling)
Don’t think I’m gonna save your skinny ass again, prick.

He SLAMS the door.

INT. DARK ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS 15

Murnau is puzzled for a moment before a PISTOL SMASHES into the side of his head, CLANGING against the dumpster and SPLASHING face-first into a large puddle of water.

Struggling to move in his soaked coat, he looks up to the gun being pressed against his temple, held in a gloved hand.

Murnau’S POV: A CLOAKED FIGURE DRESSED IN BLACK stands over him, but we can’t see his face.

After a long moment passes, we hear Soldier’s footsteps coming closer. The Man in Black snatches the briefcase and bolts out of the alleyway.

Soldier comes back, holding the camera.

SOLDIER
What the hell happened?

MURNAU
He... took the briefcase!

He points to the mouth of the alleyway. Soldier spins around to see the black hearse REVVING UP. He quickly raises the camera to his eye.

FLASH!

FADE TO WHITE

CHAPTER TWO: "DINNER’S READY!"

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - MOVING 16

Fritz and Scout drive down a dark, wet street.

SCOUT
Hey, Doc?

FRITZ
Yes?

SCOUT
What’d you mean when you said "I’m not the first"? You talkin’ about the accident?

(beat)

FRITZ
There have been others.

SCOUT
You tellin’ me that this has happened before?

Fritz doesn’t answer him.

SCOUT
Doc -- *what is wrong with the Respawn Machine?*

(long pause)

FRITZ
It doesn’t always work like it’s supposed to. Some get *stuck* inside trying to come through.

SCOUT
What the hell are you talkin’ about, Doc?

FRITZ
I’ve only seen it happen once -- on the front lines. He came through screaming. Horribly. When I ran in to see what happened I...

SCOUT
What’d you see, Doc?

FRITZ
You don’t want to know.

EXT. SCOUT’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 17

They pull up outside a derelict building on Purgatory Avenue. This is Scout’s house -- or his mother’s house, rather.

SCOUT
Thanks for the ride, Doc. You sure you don’t wanna come in? At least say ’hi’ to Ma.

Fritz shakes his head and smiles.

FRITZ
Tell her I did, Scout. I have to get back to the office.

SCOUT
You really gotta get out more often, Doc.

He opens the door and steps out into the rain. Fritz’s eyes fight to stay open.

SCOUT
(shouting out)
Catch you later, alright?

FRITZ
I’ll see you soon.

They wave goodbye. Fritz rolls the window up and drives off. Scout walks up and rings the door bell.

SCOUT
Hey Ma! I’m home!

Eventually, his MOTHER opens the door.

SCOUT’S MOM (O.S.)
Where the hell have you been? You’re soaked!

SCOUT
Just gettin’ a check-up, Ma. I’m fine.

SCOUT’S MOM (O.S.)
Get in here!

He steps into the house. As the ambulance disappears down the road, we see a BLACK HEARSE parked outside.

INT. SCOUT’S LIVING ROOM - TIME CUT 18

CLOSE ON: TV SCREEN

SCENE FROM THE FILM ’M’ (1931): Opening scene -- A little girl stands in the middle of a ring of children, turning and pointing to each of them as she sings some kind of nursery rhyme.

GIRL
(German, subtitled)
"Just you wait, it won’t be long...
Soon the Man in Black will come...
With his cleaver’s blade so true...
He’ll make mincemeat out of you!"
You’re out.

REVERSE SHOT: Scout’s sitting on his lounge comfortably. He’s playing with a baseball, tossing it in the air absentmindedly. His MOTHER is busy with something in the kitchen.

SCOUT’S MOM (O.S.)
So how was the doctor, dear?

SCOUT
...Fine?

SCOUT’S MOM (O.S.)
Did you ask him to stop by?

SCOUT
Tried. I feel bad for the guy.

SCOUT’S MOM (O.S.)
What’s he been up to?

SCOUT
I think he’s on something.

He looks at the bottle of pills Fritz gave him. He takes one, puts it in his mouth, and downs it with a can of soda.

TV SCREEN: Next scene -- The girl bounces a large ball down the street. She throws it up against a large sign with bold lettering.

In German, the sign reads:

"10,000 MARKS REWARD - WHO IS THE MURDERER?"

After a moment, the shadow of a man in a hat passes over the sign. It looks down at the girl.

HANS BECKERT
(though TV)
That’s a nice ball. What’s your name?

GIRL
(through TV)
Elsie Beckmann.

Suddenly, the rotary phone next to Scout RINGS.

SCOUT’S MOM (O.S.)
Dinner’s ready, dear!

SCOUT
Okay, hang on.

He answers.

SCOUT
(on phone)
Hello?

VOICE
(through phone)
Thanks, Doc. Are you sure you don’t wanna come in? At least say ’hi’ to Ma.

SCOUT
(on phone)
What did you... who is this?

VOICE
(through phone)
You really gotta get out more often, Doc.

SCOUT
(on phone)
What the hell is this? Who are you?

VOICE
(through phone)
Hi Ma, I’m home!

Dial tone. Scout puts the phone down, confused and timid. He looks over to the kitchen. His mother’s head is poking out from the corner, looking directly at him.

She says nothing, completely expressionless.

SCOUT
Ma...?

Suddenly, the mother’s head DROPS to the floor.

TV SCREEN: The little girl’s ball rolls into an empty ditch. A large balloon couples with a set of power lines and floats away off screen.

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - SOME TIME LATER 19

Fritz is asleep on the dashboard, parked on the side of the road.

A car BACKFIRING suddenly jars him awake.

He looks in the rear view mirror...

...a black hearse is speeding away from outside the house.

Fritz has a very bad feeling. He gets out and walks back to the door. He rings the doorbell and waits.

Nothing.

FRITZ
Hello?

He knocks on the door. It swings open. Unlocked.

Stepping inside, cautiously, Fritz finds the living room empty. The hat rack is knocked over and several chess pieces are scattered across the carpet. *’M’* is still playing on the TV.

He notices something on the floor; a small red stain seeping from behind the corner of the kitchen.

Fritz’s blood turns to ice. Paralyzed by a rush of fear, he finds the will to edge himself forward, turning the corner. He GASPS.

Scout’s mother is lying on the kitchen floor, her SEVERED HEAD lying a few feet from the rest of her body.

Fritz COLLAPSES, his eyes WIDE, fixated on the mangled corpse in front of him.

He looks up at the kitchen wall; a massive **’M’**, painted in blood.

Suddenly, there is LOUD BANGING at the door.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Police department! If anyone's inside, make yourself known!

Frightened, Fritz scrambles to his feet, trying to find another way out.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S.)
Police department! Final warning! We're breaking it down!

The room spirals into a blur as Fritz becomes pale and light-headed.

VISIONS OF PRISON fill his mind, nightmarish images of CONCRETE WALLS and STEEL BARS, with HORRIFIC MONSTERS laughing MANICALLY as they TORTURE him with ELECTRIC CATTLE PRODS, like some kind of animal.

His eyes roll back into his head as he faints, COLLAPSING to the floor.

INT. MURNAU'S CAR - SAME NIGHT 20

CLOSE ON: POLAROID -- The black hearse, blurred in its motion. The driver's image is distorted and unrecognizable.

Murnau is driving with Soldier, moving fast down a long, dark highway.

SOLDIER
So the hand-off was an undertaker?

MURNAU
(massaging his wound)
Almost. What could be in that briefcase?

SOLDIER
Money? Gold? Diamonds?

MURNAU
I don't think this is about money.

SOLDIER
Is it a bomb?

MURNAU
If it was, he wouldn't hit me over the head with one.

SOLDIER
What if it’s Archibald’s severed head?

MURNAU
Enough, Soldier! If we don’t find out where he is, they’ll have all our heads.

SOLDIER
I think I know who to ask.

He fiddles with the police scanner.

MURNAU
What the hell do you think you’re doing?

SOLDIER
Watch.

MURNAU
Soldier, that only receives, it doesn’t transmit!

Soldier taps a button.

SOLDIER
Breaker-breaker, this is One-Eight-Five, I’m gonna need an update on that stolen hearse.

OFFICER 187
(through radio)
Roger, One-Eight-Five. This is One-Eight-Seven. I have visual on a black hearse heading south on *Brixton.*

Murnau’s eyebrows go up. Soldier shoots him a look that screams ’I-told-you-so’.

SOLDIER
Ten-four. Tail it.

He leans back in his chair.

OFFICER 187
(through radio)
He’s pulling up on Purgatory Avenue. I’m gonna intercept.

MURNAU
(worried)
Soldier...

SOLDIER
Shhh...

OFFICER 187
(through radio)
Sir, I'm gonna need you to roll down your window. I can't see your face.

A tense pause. Suddenly, MUFFLED SCREAMS scratch out from the scanner before the feed goes dead. Soldier and Murnau's faces go white.

DISPATCH
(through radio)
One-Eight-Seven? One-Eight-Seven, do you copy?

They hold their breath, not saying a word.

DISPATCH
(through radio)
Available units; we've got a possible four-fifteen on Purgatory. Please check what's going on.

OFFICER 184
(through radio)
Copy that, Dispatch. This is One-Eight-Four. I'm on my way.

MURNAU
What street was that?

SOLDIER
Purgatory.

VROOM! Murnau SLAMS on the brakes and pulls a fast 180, speeding off in the opposite direction.

INT. DARK ROOM - UNKNOWN TIME 21

Fritz's eyes open. He lies on his back, facing the ceiling. It's quiet and dark.

He sighs; another nightmare.

He tries to get up, but his forehead bangs against a hard wall. He winces briefly before confusion sets in. He tries to roll over, and realizes he can’t move.

Panic sets in. Then fear.

A heart-sinking fear.

INT. CHAPEL - UNKNOWN TIME 22

Muffled screams ring out from a COFFIN atop the altar.

The church is completely empty... except for The Man in Black, sitting alone in the front row.

A square hole opens up in the adjacent wall, revealing the red-hot glow of a CREMATORY FURNACE. The coffin, now on rails, slowly begins to move towards it.

INT. DOCTOR’S OFFICE - NIGHT 23

Fritz wakes up immediately in the pitch-black room, THUNDERSTORMS RAGING outside. He finds himself lying on top of his work desk, sweating profusely. He suddenly bursts into tears, putting his hands to his face, shivering as he recovers from the shock and terror of yet another nightmare.

He removes his hands. There is BLOOD all over his face. He looks down to see BLOOD on his palms.

INT. MURNAU’S CAR - SAME NIGHT 24

Murnau and Soldier say nothing to each other.

MURNAU
You just had to get the police involved, didn’t you?

The scanner crackles to life again.

OFFICER 184
(through radio)
ALL UNITS! THIS IS ONE-EIGHT-FOUR, SHOTS FIRED! REPEAT! SHOTS FIRED! I NEED BACK UP ON PURGATORY AVENUE RIGHT NOW!

Murnau steps on the gas.

V-R-O-O-O-M!

INT. DARK ALLEYWAY - SAME NIGHT 25

Two cops are standing out on the road. One pokes a flashlight through the mouth of the alleyway.

OFFICER #1
Can’t see anything.

OFFICER #2
Forget it. One of our guys needs backup downtown.

OFFICER #1
Some night, huh?

The camera pans around to the inside of the alleyway. The Russian’s body is GONE.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 26

Fritz washes his hands at the sink. He splashes his face with water, trying to get the blood off his skin. He looks up at the mirror.

All of a sudden, his reflection REACHES THROUGH THE GLASS and GRABS him by the throat. He struggles against the Second Fritz briefly before he is pulled towards the mirror, SMASHING his forehead on the glass.

He collapses on the floor, groaning.

Gentle footsteps come from behind the office door.

Fritz turns to see a YELLOW ENVELOPE pushed underneath.

INT. DOCTOR’S OFFICE/HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 27

He opens the door; there is no one there. He sticks his head out into the hallway; it’s empty. He SLAMS the door shut.

Disgruntled, Fritz takes the envelope to his desk, adjusting the desk lamp before tearing it open.

He pulls out a KEY, with a handle shaped like the letter **’M’**.

Fritz tears open the envelope and pulls out a STACK OF POLAROIDS.

The photos are of him and Scout. One in the doctor’s office. Another in the ambulance. A shot of them with Scout’s mother; all taken from seemingly impossible angles.

(CONTINUED)

The phone RINGS. Fritz JUMPS. Reluctantly, he answers.

FRITZ
(on phone)
Hello?

VOICE (O.S.)
(through phone)
Hey, Doc! I know it’s late but... mind if I ask you something?

FRITZ
(on phone)
Oh, thank God! Scout! Are you alright?

SCOUT (O.S.)
(through phone)
"You ever have bad dreams?"

FRITZ
(on phone)
...What? Scout, where are you?

SCOUT (O.S.)
(through phone)
"You ever get the feeling like you’re being watched?"

Dread begins to sink in. Then... Fritz hears MUFFLED SCREAMING through the phone. He jumps to his feet.

FRITZ
(on phone)
What the hell have you done with him?!

The phone goes DEAD. THUNDER BOOMS overhead, LIGHTING UP the office through the windows. Fritz notices something on the wall above the door.

"CONAGHER SLAUGHTERHOUSE" *-- written in **BLOOD**.*

FADE OUT

CHAPTER THREE: INTEL HELL

CUT TO:

INT. SCOUT’S HOUSE - SAME NIGHT 28

The bulb of Murnau’s camera CRACKLES as he collects a snapshot of the bloody **’M’** on the kitchen wall. He stands over the headless body for a moment before turning away.

Soldier digs through a set of drawers, fumbling with his hands, without gloves, trying to find clues.

CHIEF OF POLICE
Can somebody get these clowns off my crime scene? This is really inconvenient.

MURNAU
For the last time, we are federal agents. I am Detective Mannix, this is Lieutenant Columbo, and we are looking for a very dangerous criminal.

CHIEF OF POLICE
I’ll believe it when I see your badge, buddy. Look, one of our boys just got shot, so can you get the hell out of here for just five minutes?

MURNAU
Is this him? I want to talk to him.

CHIEF OF POLICE
No you can’t talk to him!

They continue to argue while Soldier fishes out some papers. It has a picture of Scout on the front. The heading is **"ADOPTION ORDER"**.

Perplexed, he reads deeper. Keywords pop out:

• "TERMINATION"

• "DEFECTIVE"

• **"AUTHORIZED BY THE BUILDERS LEAGUE UNITED CORPORATION"**

Officer 184 is lying against the wall, being treated by paramedics. Blood spills out of his stomach.

MURNAU
You. Tell me exactly what happened.

OFFICER 184
H-he had to be on drugs or something. I tried to bring him down, but he just kept coming at me. It was like a nightmare.

Another OFFICER walks in the door.

OFFICER
Chief, they just found One-Eight-Seven’s body stuffed inside a dumpster.

CHIEF OF POLICE
Jesus Christ -- two in one night. Somebody hates me.

He turns the page over. There’s a photo of Fritz on it with a full name: **DR. FRITZ LUDWIG.**

This heading is **"DOCTOR’S REPORT".** More keywords:

• "DIAGNOSIS: UNEXPECTED LOSS OF BRAIN ACTIVITY AFTER RESPAWN"

• "INABILITY TO PERFORM SIMPLE TASKS"

• "PATIENT HAS BEEN DISMISSED UNDER PROTECTION OF A LEGAL GUARDIAN"

OFFICER 184
Agh! I’m dying over here!

MURNAU
How did he escape? What was he driving?

CHIEF OF POLICE
Look, I think you’ve asked enough questions, Mannix.

OFFICER 184
Ambulance!

CHIEF OF POLICE
See, look. He needs a doctor, so why don’t you just--

OFFICER 184
No, he was driving a goddamn ambulance!

CHIEF OF POLICE
...What?

Murnau thinks for a moment before moving into the kitchen. Soldier turns, perplexed.

SOLDIER
An ambulance?

OFFICER 184
Yeah.

MURNAU (O.S.)
(calling out)
Columbo!

He walks into the kitchen.

Murnau raises an item, the murder weapon: a BONESAW, covered in BLOOD.

MURNAU
Get in the car.

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - MOVING 29

Flying down an abandoned road, we see Fritz’s eyes, WIDE and FEARFUL in the rear view mirror. He’s wearing his lab coat, covering the blood spattered shirt.

After checking if he’s being followed, he looks back at the road. He SCREAMS.

The Man in Black appears in his headlights, standing in the middle of the road.

Fritz SWERVES to avoid him, but we see that the Man in Black has disappeared. The ambulance CRASHES through a barrier and SKIDS over an open ditch.

As he comes to a complete stop, Fritz takes a moment to collect himself before looking out of the cracked windscreen.

EXT. CONAGHER SLAUGHTERHOUSE - CONTINUOUS 30

He made it, but something’s wrong; the BLU base is GONE, as if completely erased from existence.

The RED fort, however, is perfectly intact, lying dormant across the bridge. Mysterious RED LIGHTS RADIATE from the windows of the highest tower.

Fritz grabs something from the back of the vehicle and gets out. We see that he’s got the MEDIGUN. His coattails flap wildly in the icy wind.

He crosses the bridge, his boots CREAKING on the wooden frame with every step. He sees something BURNING up ahead. Getting closer, he discovers the black hearse; on FIRE.

Fritz walks up to the entrance, shut off by roller metal doors. There is a mass of RUSTED SIGNS attached to the front of one of them. They all spell out a clear message:

DON’T GO IN.

He puts his ear to the door. He can hear something behind it...

...something like a METALLIC SCRATCHING.

At that moment, a CRUNCHING GROAN catches Fritz’s attention. He spins around to witness the bridge COLLAPSE. Chunks of wooden panels and steel beams are RIPPED apart, TUMBLING LOUDLY and CRASHING into the water below.

INT. HOSPITAL OFFICE - SAME NIGHT 31

Soldier KICKS IN the door, sending cardboard boxes and papers flying everywhere. Murnau walks in first, raising a flashlight.

MURNAU
Check the bathroom.

Soldier nods and goes inside. Murnau scans the desk with the flashlight.

He examines the photographs left on the table. He picks up the one of Fritz and Scout and inspects it.

SOLDIER
(from the bathroom)
Storm’s cut the power.

Murnau turns his attention from the photo to the wall. He shines the torch to get a better look at the BLOODY MESSAGE.

MURNAU
(under breath)
Christ.

SOLDIER
The mirror’s shattered. There’s blood all over the sink.

Soldier comes out of the bathroom, waving his torch around.

SOLDIER
Must’ve been a fight or something--

He shines it directly into a SKELETON, standing over him in the corner. He SCREAMS, falling and knocking it over in tandem.

Murnau shines the torch in his direction.

SOLDIER
My God... it’s his latest victim.

Murnau comes over and looks at the skeleton on the floor.

MURNAU
It’s a model, you idiot.

He walks back to the table and picks up one of the many pill bottles lying around.

MURNAU
This is worse than I thought.

SOLDIER
You know, after the war, they made me take a bunch of this stuff. Said I was seeing things.

MURNAU
Mm-hm. And did the medication work?

SOLDIER
I don’t know. I never took any of it.

MURNAU
Right.

Suddenly, the PHONE RINGS. They both FREEZE. Murnau slowly reaches out to answer, but Soldier beats him to it.

MURNAU
No! Don’t!

SOLDIER
Hello?

VOICE (O.S.)
(through phone)
"Hello? Who is this?"

SOLDIER
Who am I? Who the hell are *you*? Who is this?

VOICE (O.S.)
(through phone)
"...What?"

MURNAU
It’s him.

SOLDIER
Listen to me, punk, you’re not gonna think this is funny when I strangle you to death with your own stethoscope.

VOICE (O.S.)
(through phone)
"WHO IS THIS?!"

SOLDIER
It’s the voice of God, you son-of-a-bitch and I’m comin’ for you!

He SLAMS down the phone.

EXT. CONAGHER SLAUGHTERHOUSE - SAME NIGHT 32

Fritz stands idly outside the RED fort. With no way to turn back, he looks for a way in. The DRAIN PIPE leading up to the top platform looks like a promising entry point.

He unplugs the Medigun from his backpack and steps back for a moment to feel the weight of it. Then, with a HEAVE, he THROWS the Medigun up in the air. It lands with a HARD THUD, RATTLING with an uncertain fragility.

Fritz now makes his way up the pipe, taking it one step at a time. He reaches out to touch the ledge, before the pipe COMES LOOSE and BREAKS. His arms flail, hands grabbing the ledge just in time. He HAULS himself up and over.

Fritz lies on his back, already exhausted. He rolls over, taking the Medigun cord and plugging it back into his backpack.

Something MOVES in the shadows, by the battlements.

Fritz FREEZES. He focuses on a single point on the doorway, trying to make out an object...

...It’s a HAND. CLAWED FINGERS.

And just like that, it VANISHES behind the wall.

Spooked, Fritz backs off.

Suddenly, a BLOODCURDLING SCREAM echoes from around the corner behind him.

Medigun raised, Fritz bolts down the corridor, passing a NEON RED SIGN with an ARROW pointing to the left.

INT. MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS 33

Fritz finds himself in TOTAL DARKNESS, illuminated only by moonlight.

Frozen in place, he quickly spins around to see a steel door SLAM shut behind him, cutting off the corridor he just came through.

A deep mechanical rocking noise escapes from the darkness.

DING!

A circular light goes off, revealing the shape of an ELEVATOR.

The doors slide open. A TOWERING MONOLITHIC MAN wearing a black suit and matching hat steps out into the room. His face is cloaked in shadow.

His menacing gaze locks onto Fritz, and he breaks into a stride.

EXT. COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS 34

Fritz RUNS FOR IT, SPRINTING outside across the upper platform, daring not to look back. He comes to the stairway entrance, blocked off by a steel shutter. With enough force, he manages to pry it loose and throw it open.

INT. STAIRWAY ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS 35

Fritz closes the shutter and throws himself behind the wall, SHUTTING his eyes, PRAYING for it all to just go away. Opening them, he sees another neon red sign with an ARROW POINTING DOWN THE STAIRS.

He can hear the HEAVY FOOTSTEPS.

BOOM.

BOOM.

BOOM.

He shuts his eyes again, crossing a hand over his chest with a quick father-son-holy-spirit.

A THUNDEROUS CRASH comes from behind the wall and Fritz is THROWN FORWARD, TUMBLING and SCREAMING all the way down.

INT. RED BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS 36

THUMP! THUMP! THUMP! Fritz hits the floor hard, his bruised body WRITHING in pain.

The Medigun comes CLATTERING down next to him. He reaches over to grab it, and finds that the cable has snapped in half, SPARKING ferociously. He CURSES, getting up and onto his feet.

It’s PITCH BLACK, except for the HARSH NEON RED LIGHTS, permeating the large room. Something like a distant radio can be heard somewhere in the darkness.

He approaches the noise, coming across some bizarre rec room. RUSTY HOOKS hang from the ceiling, above an arranged table and plastic chair.

Fritz moves closer, inspecting the various objects on the table: A screwdriver, a pair of pliers, knives, and a WRENCH, splattered in blood.

He turns around, slowly. In the claustrophobic lighting, Fritz sees another **"M"**, yet again, painted in BLOOD.

Suddenly, something RATTLES from the other side of the room. Fritz snaps his head towards the noise and sees a WOODEN COFFIN, set upright against the wall. It’s chained up with a padlock.

Something falls off the table and lands next to Fritz’s feet. It’s a BASEBALL.

(CONTINUED)

He looks back at the coffin. Another THUMP comes from inside.

Fritz, petrified, digs into his pocket and pulls out the M-shaped key.

He slowly approaches the coffin, takes the padlock, and inserts the key.

IT FITS.

Turning it, the lock CLICKS and OPENS, and the chain falls to the floor.

He steps back, to the side. With a gulp, he opens the lid, just an inch.

He peers inside. TWO BIG EYES are staring back at him.

IT'S SCOUT. He frantically mumbles with a GAG over his mouth.

He THRASHES, THROWING himself forward and CRASHING to the floor.

Fritz sees that Scout's arms have been tied behind his back. He bends down to undo the straps and pulls away the rope, all the while Scout is struggling like mad.

Then, Scout spins around and PUNCHES Fritz in the face, knocking him out. Scout rips off his gag and gets to his feet, clutching his abdomen. Fritz regains his senses and throws out an arm.

FRITZ
Wait! Scout! I'm trying to help you!

Scout turns to face Fritz. He has an insane look in his eyes.

SCOUT
If I had a gun I'd shoot ya you sick bastard!

He runs off around the corner.

FRITZ
No! Stop!

BLAM! BLAM! Rapid machine gun shots echo from the other room. A HORRID SCREAM rings out.

INT. RED INTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS 37

Two hands, one gloved, relax at the trigger of a Wrangler, manually controlling the Level 2 sentry gun.

INT. RED BASEMENT HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 38

Fritz hurries down the other hallway, coming to a stop at the corner.

We see MAYNARD, standing beside his sentry gun with Wrangler at the ready. He sets it down on the table, next to the BLACK BRIEFCASE. We see ZED, resided in front of the table, CIGARETTE hanging out of his mouth. He glares down at...

...Scout, lying on the floor in a pool of his own blood. He’s been shot in the torso. He’s unable to move, but certainly able to scream.

MAYNARD
(laughing)
Well that sure wasn’t smart, was it?

Fritz see this, hiding in the shadows, but he is unable to do anything. Zed advances toward the Scout.

ZED
You look lost, boy.

He crouches down, getting close.

ZED
Go on. Say somethin’.

Scout spits blood in his face. Maynard laughs.

Zed recoils, wiping his face as he stands back up.

He ditches the cigarette, crushing it with his toe of his boot.

ZED
Now, brother, I do believe that you were the one who chained up that coffin.

MAYNARD
Indeed I did, brother. Up to specification.

ZED
So how’d he get out?

(pause)

Zed PUNCHES his brother in the face.

ZED
Dumbass.

He approaches Scout slowly, with terrifyingly deliberate steps.

ZED
Well, whoever did let you out --
I’m glad they did, ’cause...

He stops, towering over his bleeding body.

ZED
...I like company.

He suddenly grabs Scout by the legs. He screams as he is dragged away into the corridor and around the corner. We can only imagine what happens there.

Fritz is unable to speak, petrified of the events unfolding in front of him. Maynard remaining in the room faces the corridor, muttering.

MAYNARD
Why’s he get to have all the fun?

Fritz takes this opportunity to bolt in and get behind the table. Maynard is startled, quickly swiveling 180 degrees, but he isn’t quick enough to see.

Fritz, now hiding behind the table, tries to get his breathing under control in long, stressful gasps for air. He tries to block out the unintelligible noises from behind he wall, shutting his eyes tight.

EXT. CONAGHER SLAUGHTERHOUSE - SAME NIGHT 39

Murnau and Soldier arrive in the car, parking beside Fritz’s ambulance. They get out and look around, bewildered.

Murnau looks out at the huge body of water. No bridge.

MURNAU
Check the ambulance.

Soldier opens the double doors. Murnau peers down into the water.

SOLDIER
Nothin’.

Murnau whips out a giant cell phone from his coat pocket.

MURNAU
We need to call for backup.

SOLDIER (O.S.)
I got it right here.

Soldier opens the trunk of the car. Murnau spins around Soldier pulls out a ROCKET LAUNCHER. He smiles proudly.

MURNAU
You’ve had that thing in *my* car this whole time?

SOLDIER
For emergencies.

MURNAU
And just what do you plan to do with it?

SOLDIER
I’m gonna use it to jump across this ravine.

MURNAU
...You really have lost your mind, haven’t you?

SOLDIER
What! I’ve done it before!

MURNAU
Put that down before you get us killed!

Murnau shoves the rocket launcher out of Soldier’s hands. It falls to the ground.

FWOOSH!

The rocket goes off and SLAMS into Murnau’s car, blowing it up into a pile of flaming wreckage.

Soldier stares at the fire, gulping.

A single bead of sweat breaks over Murnau’s eye.

As Soldier bends down to pick up the launcher, a BULLET WHIZZES over his head.

SOLDIER
GET DOWN!

Soldier TACKLES Murnau, and they TUMBLE down into the ravine.

SPLASH!

INT. RED INTEL ROOM - SAME NIGHT 40

Maynard turns on the radio. On comes a heavily distorted rock track.

Fritz pokes his head out from under the table.

REVERSE SHOT: Maynard BITES the cap of a beer bottle off with his teeth.

Fritz sees that the Wrangler is unguarded on the table. He tries to reach his arm around to claw at it, but he can’t quite reach.

THE PHONE ON THE DESK RINGS. Fritz flies back under the table just as Maynard turns his head.

Fritz covers his mouth, shaking uncontrollably as Maynard approaches the phone. He answers.

MAYNARD
(on phone)
Hey Dell, you haven’t called me in a while! How’s Dustbowl workin’ out, brother?

He laughs condescendingly.

UNKNOWN CALLER
(through phone)
Dustbowl is gone.

Maynard’s face slowly drops. He knows this voice.

MAYNARD
(on phone)
Gone?

UNKNOWN CALLER
(through phone)
You heard me. There’s nothing left of it.

MAYNARD
(on phone)
And what about my little brother? Is he alright?

UNKNOWN CALLER
(through phone)
Listen, I'm coming to the slaughterhouse now. Is the briefcase secure?

MAYNARD
(on phone)
Sure. I swear to God, if anything happens to my brother, I'm gonna...

UNKNOWN CALLER
(through phone)
Shut up and listen to me. Forget the test subjects. I think we've been compromised.

MAYNARD
(on phone)
You're so goddamn inconsiderate.

O.S. -- Scout SCREAMS.

MAYNARD
(calling out)
SHUT UP!

UNKNOWN CALLER
(through phone)
Did he get out?

MAYNARD
(on phone)
Yeah, who knows how.

ZED (O.S.)
If you don't tell me who let you out, bad things are gonna happen to you, boy.

O.S. -- Violent noises. Another SCREAM.

MAYNARD
(on phone)
Look, when are you gonna be back? We shouldn't have to deal with this.

UNKNOWN CALLER
(through phone)
Don’t let the briefcase out of your sight.

MAYNARD
(on phone)
And what about my broth-

The phone goes dead.

He SLAMS it down, storming off to the other end of the room. Fritz rolls over and watches him through the bottom of the table.

In the shadows, Maynard sits down at a GRAND PIANO. He lifts the lid, rests his hands over the keys, and begins to PLAY.

Surprisingly careful and delicate notes RESONATE through the basement, GRINDING against the SHRILL SCREAMS of Scout in the other room.

Fritz looks down at the phone cord. He UNPLUGS it from the wall.

He takes the phone down off the table, and WRAPS the cord TIGHT around his hands.

He stands up, leaving the cover of the table, SLOWLY AND QUIETLY APPROACHING Maynard.

FWIP!

The cord comes around Maynard’s neck and Fritz pulls back AS HARD AS HE CAN. He SPLUTTERS and CHOKES, GRASPING at at the stringy cord DIGGING into his throat.

They both FALL to the floor, but Fritz tightens his grip even more as Maynard THRASHES side to side, KICKING his legs.

In the scuffle, he grabs the phone rotary and SMASHES it into Fritz’s nose.

That did it. Fritz takes his hands off Maynard’s neck and grabs his face, CRYING out in pain.

Maynard rolls off the top of Fritz, clutching his neck and GAGGING.

Fritz checks his hand, his nose BLEEDS.

They both get up onto their feet, DAZED, STAGGERING SLOWLY into a FIGHTING STANCE. Maynard eyes down Fritz through his goggles, somehow GROWING to a MONSTROUS HEIGHT, TOWERING above him.

They both throw up their fists, circling one another.

Fritz throws a punch for his head, but misses as the Engineer ducks. He hits Fritz HARD in the stomach, and uppercuts him in the face.

Fritz falls to the floor. Maynard walks up to him and raises his boot, STOMPING him in the face. Over and over again. His glasses fly off his face, bloodied and broken beyond repair.

Maynard moves away and pulls out a shotgun from underneath the piano.

Fritz looks up at the muzzle of the shotgun pointed at his head.

He SCREAMS.

BLAM!

Fritz lies spread out, motionless. A MASSIVE GUNSHOT WOUND GUSHES BLOOD all across his chest and spills out onto the floor.

Maynard backs off and CLOSES the piano lid over the keys. He goes over to the far wall and opens up a metal panel, revealing a chute that goes down. A long way down.

We look back at Fritz’s dead body. SLOWLY BUT SURELY, his blood begins to SEEP BACK INTO HIS BODY, as if being absorbed like a sponge. The spattered wounds in his chest begin to SOW THEMSELVES BACK TOGETHER.

FRITZ’S EYES OPEN, now ELECTRIC BLUE.

The world around him goes BLACK AND WHITE. He rises and sits up, looking around in a bewildered and disoriented state.

A HIGH-PITCHED SCREAM catches his attention, and his head SNAPS to the sound, ringing inside his mind.

He looks back at Maynard, his back turned to the wall.

Fritz BITES his gloved fingers, PEELING them off his hands.

He gets up, taking off his coat. He lets it drop to the floor.

He picks up a discarded beer bottle, and slowly makes his way over to the Engineer.

MAYNARD
Hang on, let me get him for ya.

Maynard turns around. WHAM! The bottle CRASHES into his face and sends him stumbling over onto the piano. He THROWS out an fist. Fritz dodges it easily, grabbing his other arm and locking it with a tightened elbow.

Fritz locks eyes with Maynard, and becomes visibly horrified when he sees that his goggles have come off his face.

Maynard has NO EYES. He SMILES MANICALLY.

Raising the sharpened bottle fragment, he DRIVES it into Maynard’s chest, STABBING him deeply. He CRIES OUT in pain, lying backwards onto the piano.

Fritz lets him go and grabs the piano lid. He SLAMS it down over Maynard’s head with GREAT FORCE.

MUFFLED SCREAMS.

Fritz raises the lid and brings it down again. He SCREAMS LOUDER.

He brings it down one last time. The screaming stops.

Fritz opens the chute door. He heaves Maynard’s lifeless body into it and DROPS him down the chute like a ton of bricks.

He leans against the railing, out of breath. Blood is smeared across his face. He smiles to himself, breaking into uncontrollable giggling.

ZED (O.S.)
What the hell’s goin’ on in there?

Fritz turns around, wiping blood off his vest. He looks around for something to really hammer the other brother’s head in good.

His eyes fall on the Wrangler, lying on the floor.

Zed comes back into the room, his head down, smoking another cigarette.

ZED
I asked you a question, dumbass. I said "what the hell are you d-"

He looks up to see Fritz standing next to the Sentry Gun, pointing the remote control directly at him.

Fritz smiles.

ZED
That ain’t a toy, son. Put it down. Now.

Fritz says nothing.

ZED
Don’t do nothin’ stupid, boy. You got no idea who you’re dealin’ with.

He pulls out a gun. Fritz is quicker, YANKING back the joystick.

TAKAKAKAKA!

BULLETS RIP through the Engineer’s body. He staggers backwards and collapses at the far wall of the corridor.

Fritz takes another DEEP BREATH. He picks up the shotgun in one hand, the briefcase in the other, and walks calmly over to the dying Engineer, his body nothing but a mangled pulp of meat.

Fritz looks down at the gun he dropped, and it’s not a gun at all. It’s a BLOODY DRILL.

The pulp SPLUTTERS.

ZED
(smiling)
I would have got you.

Fritz raises the shotgun, pointing it right at his head.

BLAM! His head EXPLODES. Fritz drops the gun and the electricity in his eyes disappears.

FADE OUT

CHAPTER FOUR: CROSSROADS

FADE IN

INT. DARK SEWER - SAME NIGHT 41

Beams of light shine through the tunnel. Murnau and Soldier trudge through murky water, their clothes SOAKED THROUGH. Murnau is immensely uncomfortable, GAGGING at the stench of wading through mud and filth. Soldier, however, has a spring in his step.

MURNAU
I’m never going to find Archibald in this excrement.

SOLDIER
Back in the war, we would spend weeks stuck in wet dugouts like this, with water up to your ankles. They were built only six feet wide, but they could go on for miles.

MURNAU
Kill me now.

SPARKS FLY from Murnau’s wrist, shooting hot pain through his arm. He quickly pulls back his sleeve and smacks his invisibility watch. It shorts out with an electric whine.

MURNAU
You have no comprehension of what you’re getting into.

Soldier spins around.

SOLDIER
(aggravated)
I have a pretty damn good idea.

MURNAU
We should have called for backup.

SOLDIER
And what the hell do you think I’m doing? I just saved you from a bullet to the head.

MURNAU
And who was it that told them we were coming? Hm? Who’s been killing our leads and getting the police involved? You have compromised this entire operation.

SOLDIER
What about all our pictures? That’s evidence we can use, right?

MURNAU
They were in the car, you idiot! Now I have nothing -- because of ***you!*** You stupid bastard, you -- ***amateur!***

Soldier says nothing. He turns his back to Murnau and starts to walk away.

MURNAU
I hope you can swim because you’re going right back out the way you came.

He pulls out the revolver and points it at Soldier. He turns around.

SOLDIER
You gonna shoot me?

MURNAU
We’re done. I don’t care what wretched battalion you think you come from. You are ***not*** coming with me.

SOLDIER
You shot one of your own before?

MURNAU
Get out of my way.

SOLDIER
Archibald teach you that?

Murnau’s eyes widen. His finger twitches against the trigger before the SNAP of a rifle echoes through the tunnel.

Neither of them say a word. Soldier turns to the sound and moves slowly towards the corner of the pipe.

BANG! A sniper’s bullet grazes past Soldier’s head, and the rocket launcher flies out of his hand before he falls backwards into the water.

SOLDIER
Jesus!

We see the RED SNIPER, sitting in a chair on the other end of the tunnel. He reloads his rifle. Soldier looks at the rocket launcher, floating in the water out in the open.

Murnau tries to pull him up to his feet as he reaches out to try and grab it.

BANG! Another shot sends him reeling back. He sticks his head as close as he can to the entrance.

SOLDIER
You better drop that rifle before I come over there and put my foot up your--

BANG! Soldier manages to get away back behind cover. Murnau taps on his watch. It almost works, but shuts itself off.

MURNAU
Who the hell is out there?

SOLDIER
Looks like Ray Charles traded the piano for an M40.

MURNAU
What?

SOLDIER
I got an idea.

Soldier turns and walks out into the open. He stands in the Sniper’s path. Murnau watches on anxiously.

SOLDIER
(shouting)
What are you, blind? Come on, right here! Take your best shot!

BANG! Soldier is SHOT IN THE CHEST, much to Murnau’s shock. He falls into the water and floats for a moment, motionless...

He SPRINGS UP, grabbing the rocket launcher.

BLAM! The explosive projectile ROARS through the tunnel. The Sniper quickly jumps up from his chair, trying to make a dash.

BOOM! It SLAMS into the wall, sending the Sniper flying off his feet and hitting the ground. He SCREAMS. His leg is gone. He can’t move.

Soldier rises to his feet, turning to Murnau. He opens his coat to reveal a BULLET PROOF VEST with a single bullet hole embedded in it.

SOLDIER
You think I didn’t come prepared?

MURNAU
How did you know he wouldn’t shoot you in the head?

SOLDIER
I didn’t.

A GUTTURAL SCREAM rings out from the other side of the tunnel. We see the Sniper, writhing on his back with blood pouring out of his missing leg. Soldier and Murnau walk up the stairs and stand over him. Murnau pulls out his revolver and aims it at the Sniper’s head.

Soldier stops him, pushing the revolver away.

SOLDIER
(sternly)
Let him bleed.

Soldier heads up the stairs. Murnau looks back at the Sniper, still in agonizing pain from the wound.

As Soldier gets up the stairs, there is a distinctive SNAP of a gun bolt behind him.

UNKNOWN
(muffled)
Drop it.

Soldier tosses the rocket launcher.

UNKNOWN
(muffled)
Turn around.

He slowly turns around to see a MASKED MAN in a butcher’s apron, behind the guardrail of the ground level platform, waiting for him comfortably with an SMG. Soldier throws the rocket launcher away from him.

Murnau freezes, thinking fast. Taking a deep breath, he goes up the stairs, placing himself in between Soldier and the Masked Man, pointing his revolver squarely at the masked man.

MURNAU
You drop it.

The Masked Man CHUCKLES.

MURNAU
Take off the mask.

The Masked Man chuckles. He SHOOTS Murnau in the knee. He SCREAMS, falling down the stairs and landing next to the Sniper.

Soldier RUNS for the door, taking cover just as the Masked Man FIRES at him with the SMG. Bullets hit a FIRE ALARM on the wall, and the door promptly SHUTS.

MURNAU
SOLDIER! DON'T LEAVE ME!

The Masked Man throws the machine gun to the floor in frustration.

Murnau looks up to see him on top of the stairs, slowly making his way down.

He LUNGES for the revolver on the floor, pulling it towards him and pointing it at the Masked Man.

CLICK! It JAMS.

The Sniper SPUTTERS. CACKLING. LAUGHING AT HIM.

The Masked Man SLAMS HIS BOOT into Murnau's face, punting him into the wall.

A long shadow falls over him, raising its arms over the terrified detective.

They GRAB him by the throat and SLAM his head into the concrete.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. RED BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS 42

He picks up the briefcase and takes a few steps into the rec room area before slumping against the wall. He slowly slides down to the floor, slipping into unconsciousness.

He opens his eyes, and sees another pair of WIDE EYES looking back at him. Scout is lying on his side, with blood smeared across his face.

(CONTINUED)

Fritz gets up immediately and hunches over his body.

His *corpse.*

With a gentle hand, he tilts Scout’s head to one side. His ear is full of BLOOD.

A sudden noise up ahead tears him away from the sight. A DARK FIGURE with a FLOWING CLOAK stands beneath a dim lamp.

Fritz’s eyes are wide. Could this be...?

The figure steps under the light. IT SHIVERS VIOLENTLY, swaying its limbs from side-to-side in an almost intoxicated fashion.

Bewildered, Fritz stares at the corrupted RED Medic, watching as it moves towards him, LUMBERING, slowly stretching its arms out with CLAWED FINGERS.

It makes HORRIBLE NOISES as it bee-lines for him. Fritz GRABS Scout and HAULS him onto his feet. He opens the coffin door and THROWS him inside, slamming it shut.

Fritz looks at the tools on the table and makes a frantic decision.

Just before the Surgeon rips Fritz to shreds, he grabs the Medigun cord and PLUGS the sparking jack DIRECTLY INTO ITS HEAD.

Electricity SHUNTS through its body, SHOCKING the Surgeon until Fritz RIPS the cord out. The Surgeon hovers for a moment before hitting the ground HARD. Fritz drops the Medigun, looking down at the smoking corpse.

One of its eyes are WHITE, the other, BRIGHT BLUE.

The rapid sparks of the Medigun illuminate the room, drawing Fritz’s attention to an OPEN DOORWAY at the far side of the room. This must have been where the Surgeon came from.

Curious, Fritz picks up the briefcase and goes to investigate. He also grabs a screwdriver from the table.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS 43

He steps inside. NO LIGHT SOURCE, EXCEPT FOR A SINGLE CRT SCREEN, positioned on a table in the center of the room. It sits next to some kind of GURNEY.

Fritz moves closer. The gurney has STRAPS attached to it, the leather skin of it stained in BLOOD.

The monitor is playing something that looks like security footage of the room from above.

ON SCREEN: A RED MEDIC is standing next to Stalingrad, STRAPPED DOWN and STRUGGLING against his restraints with a GAG in his mouth. Red Medic has a SYRINGE in his gloved hand.

RED MEDIC
(on T.V.)
Patient appears to have died from a bullet to the heart... Normally, we have papers signed before doing these things, but... Ah, no matter... To hell with Helix, the old fools... They don’t deserve this...

He steps forward and JAMS the syringe into Stalingrad’s neck. It causes a VIOLENT REACTION as he THRASHES in the seat.

RED MEDIC
(on T.V.)
My God.

Stalingrad begins to CONVULSE and his muscles ENGORGE as his body GROWS IN SIZE before the Red Medic’s eyes. He can’t look away.

This was a mistake, as Stalingrad suddenly BREAKS FREE from his restraints and GRABS the Red Medic by the throat.

RED MEDIC
(on T.V.)
NO!

Stalingrad HURLS the RED Medic across the room, and his limp body CRASHES into a shelf stocked full of CHEMICALS.

The feed CUTS OFF.

Suddenly, a sharp METALLIC CLANG makes Fritz JUMP. He looks into the shadows.

SILENCE... then...

STOMP.

STOMP.

STOMP.

A HUGE FIGURE, at least ten feet tall, TOWERS over him, wearing some kind of MASK.

STALINGRAD
(muffled)
Builders League...

Fritz BOLTS for the door and RUNS up the stairway before a GIANT FIST comes CRASHING through the wall.

He hides behind the corner and watches as the hulking behemoth breaks through the rubble. The Surgeon, still alive, CLUTCHES at the giant’s shoes. Stalingrad bends down and picks the Surgeon up his head with great ease. Holding his dangling body up high in the air, he CRUSHES the skull in his fist.

Fritz GASPS. Stalingrad slowly turns his head, facing Fritz. He THROWS the Surgeon’s body to the ground.

Fritz RUNS FOR IT.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE DOWNSTAIRS - SAME NIGHT 44

Soldier pries at the fire door with all the strength in his arms. It won’t move an inch.

C-R-A-C-K-!

Soldier SCREAMS as his back gives out. He leans up against the metal door, whimpering in pain.

He looks up and sees a shadowy silhouette standing an odd yard away from him. He’s facing somebody else we can’t see.

Soldier stands up, his back still aching but he doesn’t care. He slowly moves in to get a closer look.

A bulb over the next hallway suddenly flickers on, then off again. Something huge moves under the light before disappearing into darkness.

Soldier takes one look and GASPS, bolting back behind the corner.

The man up ahead turns around, looking right at him.

Panicked, Soldier grabs a CROWBAR lodged in a set of barn doors and pulls it free with a loud *CLANG!*

He now starts to pay attention to his surroundings. Pieces of bone and torn fragments of cloth are littered all over the ground. Blood is all over the walls.

He looks around and finds a LOCKED GATE, chained up with a thick padlock. He is visibly pissed off at the number of locked doors he’s come across, but he gets an idea. He raises the crowbar and STRIKES the padlock, and it breaks loose right away. The gate swings open slowly.

He looks back at the man, who’s walking directly towards him with a flashlight. Soldier THROWS the crowbar at his head and STRIKES him in the temple before hurling himself through the gate.

He looks down another long, dark corridor full of SKELETONS. Perplexed, he has no time to react before MULTIPLE HANDS DROP from the ceiling and wrap their fingers around Soldier’s torso. They grab at his shoulders, his neck, COVERING his face, PULLING him upwards. He STRUGGLES against them as his feet leave the floor, kicking the air.

We hear the screeching noise again, NOW MUCH CLOSER, and suddenly the arms STOP PULLING at once. Soldier is suspended mid-air, one hand still covering his mouth.

He watches the doorway he came from, and a TALL SHADOW passes over the wall. His eyes WIDEN in horror as some ELONGATED HUMANOID moves into the light, its spine CRACKING BACKWARDS and its knees BUCKLING INWARDS as it clumsily stumbles forward. Its jaw HANGS OPEN, UNHINGED, bearing JAGGED TEETH, and its bony arms THRASH with SHARPENED CLAWS.

Its head pivots on a neck broken long ago, as if it were BLIND, using its other senses to find what was making noise.

The arms hold Soldier still.

As the Creature approaches even closer, a NOISE like WOOD BREAKING attracts its attention. It STAGGERS away back around the corner, disappearing into the darkness.

After a moment, the hands DROP Soldier, and he falls face-first onto the dirt.

He looks up, slowly, and CRAWLS forward.

LOUD VOICES cry out. Shells WHISTLE and EXPLODE.

Soldier climbs up to his feet. He feels RAIN washing down on his face and soaking into his jacket. He looks up to a FURY of STORM CLOUDS overhead, BUCKETING down rain.

The skeletons on the ground start to move, strangely. Their appearance starts to change, growing flesh and muscle over dead bones, then clothing.

Soldier moves forward down the corridor, and as he comes into the clearing, he discovers he is no longer in Conagher Slaughterhouse at all.

EXT. AMERICAN TRENCH - WORLD WAR II 45

The light of SEVERAL BOMB BLASTS above the barbed-wired blockades of a TRENCH LINE shine blinding-white in Soldier's eyes. An ARTILLERY TANK rolls noisily across the battlefield, shaking DUST and METAL FRAGMENTS down below.

He looks around this enclosed safe area. He sees two men playing chess in the corner. One of them has his back turned, his face hidden. The other has a PLAGUE MASK over his head.

VOICE (O.S.)
Soldier!

He turns to see Murnau running towards him from one end of the trench.

MURNAU
What are you doing? There's nothing for you here!

The Masked Man suddenly appears from above, poking a FLAMETHROWER down into the trench. Murnau is suddenly ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

Soldier runs for it, down a long winding passage before TRIPPING over a body. He EATS DIRT on the way down. Lifting his head up, he sees someone climbing up a ladder. A YOUNG SOLDIER.

Soldier jumps to his feet and reaches out to try and stop him.

The Young Soldier suddenly falls backwards off the ladder. His head is BLEEDING.

SHAKING UNCONTROLLABLY, he looks up at Soldier with HUGE PLEADING EYES.

Soldier kneels down and props the Young Soldier up on the barriers.

His face drops and his skin goes cold. There is nothing Soldier can do.

The shivering quickly turns into VIOLENT CONVULSIONS. Soldier watches in horror as the Boy's eyes turn BONE WHITE. He begins to FROTH AT THE MOUTH.

(CONTINUED)

Soldier takes his hands off him immediately and gets to his feet. He spins on his heel and BOLTS in the other direction.

The Young Soldier SCREAMS, stretching out an arm. His entire body starts to TWIST and BREAK AT THE JOINTS with HORRIBLE CRACKING NOISES. It’s as if his limbs are getting LONGER.

YOUNG SOLDIER
DON’T LEAVE ME!

Soldier runs as fast as his legs will carry him, back through the long dark path within the trench walls. As he comes to a clearing, he suddenly stops in disbelief as he finds himself...

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS 46

...back where he was. He trips over his own feet again, either out of clumsiness or exhaustion. He lies on his back, rain falling onto his face, utterly distraught.

Soldier does his best to get up on his feet without hurting too much, but he can’t avoid the sharp pain shooting through his spine. He reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a little flask. He puts it to his lips and takes a long swig.

He looks up at the overhead platform and sees the entrance to the stairwell COMPLETELY DESTROYED.

VOICE (O.S.)
Oi!

Startled, Soldier turns around.

VOICE (O.S.)
Ya gonna finish that?

Soldier takes out a flashlight and points it at the dark figure ahead. It’s the RED DEMOMAN, stuck behind a cramped makeshift prison cell made from wood and steel fencing. He winces at the light.

After a moment of hesitation, he hands him the flask through the fence. He drinks for a long while.

Soldier now just notices that Demoman is MISSING HIS ENTIRE LEFT ARM.

SOLDIER
I’m looking for Jules Archibald.

DEMOMAN
Who’s askin’?

SOLDIER
His rescue.

DEMOMAN
’Fraid you’re gonna be disappointed.

SOLDIER
I wanna know what the hell’s goin’ on here.

DEMOMAN
I don’t know. Man’s probably mincemeat by now.

SOLDIER
I’ve already lost one man -- I’m not gonna lose another.

DEMOMAN
Then you’re a dead man!

Soldier reaches through the fence and grabs Demoman by the collar with both hands.

SOLDIER
You haven’t lost both eyes yet, Cyclops, so tell me what you’ve seen.

DEMOMAN
Conagher brothers.

SOLDIER
They run the joint, but this is R.E.D. territory.

DEMOMAN
Not anymore.

(beat)

SOLDIER
Who’s the guy you were just talkin’ to?

DEMOMAN
...What guy?

Another SCREECH. Soldier peers into the darkness.

SOLDIER
(turning away)
I don’t have time for this.

DEMOMAN
Wait! You have to get me out of here.

Soldier turns back.

SOLDIER
Why the hell should I?

DEMOMAN
There’s a whole stash of guns locked in a keep upstairs. I can getchya in.

CLANG! Soldier turns back and moves slowly towards the sound. He can see a figure moving in the dark.

He has no time to react before an object hurtles towards him, SMASHING into his helmet loudly. He tumbles to the ground and picks up what was thrown at him.

It’s a CROWBAR.

A sound like NAILS ON A CHALKBOARD sends a chill down Soldier’s spine as he instinctively backs away. Something is coming his way, fast.

He works the crowbar into the metal framing of the cage, prying off the fence. Demoman tries to walk out, but he stumbles, collapsing to the ground. Soldier looks up to see a large shadow moving towards him.

As it comes into the light, we see it for the true horror it really is; something resembling a man, stretched to impossible lengths, its fingers elongated like mangled claws. Its movement is completely inhuman, cracking bones as its limbs buckle and swing wildly with every step.

Breaking out of his trance, Soldier bends down to pick up Demoman, hauling him over his shoulder, commando-style.

The Creature suddenly LUNGES at them. Soldier ducks just in time to pick up his crowbar before running as fast as he can out of the room and into the courtyard. He encounters a long staircase, leading up to the next floor. Heavy as the Demoman is, he begins to climb, with the Creature approaching at a staggered, yet brisk pace. With its contorted, inverted knee joints, it stumbles and falls onto the stairs. Unable to walk, it CLIMBS up the stairs like a diagonal ladder.

It GRABS Soldier’s leg, bringing him down. Soldier can’t bear Demoman’s weight anymore and lets him fall off his shoulders, tumbling onto the top platform. Soldier lies on the stairs, rolling on his back to face the approaching monster. He waits until it gets closer, then DRIVES the sharp end of the crowbar into its face.

The Creature HOWLS and THRASHES. Soldier holds fast, impaling it until it lies motionless. He YANKS the crowbar out of its head, spurting black blood everywhere, then BOOTS the mangled carcass down to the bottom of the stairs.

(beat)

Soldier takes a breather, resting his head on the wooden steps.

Demoman watches on with one frightful eye.

INT. MAIN ROOM - TIME CUT 47

Demoman flips a light switch. An overhead tungsten bulb flickers to life.

He pulls up the sleeve on his remaining arm with his teeth to reveal a TATTOO, like a BARCODE, going across his arm. He holds this under a MACHINE that SCANS the code with a glowing red beam.

KA-CHUNK! The metal door UNLOCKS and slowly rises with a rusty grind.

INT. RESPAWN ROOM - CONTINUOUS 48

BODIES; sprawled across the floor in clumps.

BLOOD; everywhere, splattered all over the walls.

Demoman creeps in. Soldier follows close behind.

They carefully step over the bodies, approaching the glass doors in the back of the room. Behind them are several cases of GUNS AND AMMUNITION.

Demoman struggles to open the glass doors.

DEMOMAN
Agh, it’s *locked*.

Soldier spots something on the ground; a TAPE RECORDER, enclosed in the fist of a SEVERED HAND.

(CONTINUED)

He picks it up and presses the play button. We start to hear sounds of a struggle.

VOICE #1
(through tape recorder)
Where’s the doctor?! Get him in here right now!

We here strange GARGLING noises.

VOICE #2
(through tape recorder)
Restrain him! Don’t let him out of the chamber!

VOICE #1
(through tape recorder)
Jesus Christ.

VOICE #2
(through tape recorder)
His eyes... look at his eyes! How did this happen?! What did you do?!

VOICE #1
(through tape recorder)
I didn’t do anything! He came through like this! Where’s that doctor, goddamnit?!

Demoman takes Soldier’s crowbar and tries to pry open doors.

A loud noise. Low GROWLING.

VOICE #1
(through tape recorder)
No-- no, get away from me! Stay back!

Doors RATTLING.

VOICE #2
(through tape recorder)
Hey-- who locked this door?! Open it right now!

A sickening CRUNCH, then SCREAMING.

VOICE #2
(through tape recorder)
Oh my god! Let me out! LET ME OUT!

Another ear-splitting scream. The feed cuts out.

Demoman SMASHES the glass doors with the crowbar LOUDLY, making Soldier drop the tape recorder.

Suddenly, an ALARM BLARES. RED STROBE LIGHTS FLASH ERRATICALLY, like a RAVE CLUB.

They dash inside and take what they can. Soldier grabs a WINCHESTER SHOTGUN and loads it up. Demoman looks around for something he can use. He spots a COLT 1911 and takes it.

He also grabs a GRENADE and stocks it away.

GUTTURAL NOISES catch their attention. They both spin around to see something HORRIFYING.

All the bodies in the room SLOWLY RISE, rearing their ugly heads towards the glass doors. GAPING MOUTHS and WHITE EYES all stare HUNGRILY at Soldier and Demoman.

The Corrupted Respawns (The Jaunts) STAGGER closer, FIVE of them, their arms stretched out with CLAWED FINGERS, SLAMMING their heads, trying to break through the door.

Sniper-Jaunt manages to BUST THROUGH the glass and climb through the hole, dangling half-way in.

Soldier-Jaunt WRENCHES that door open by sheer strength. It opens automatically and catches Sniper-Jaunt in the hole, CRUSHING HIM against the wall. It CHOPS him in half.

But he keeps coming at them; his top-half CRAWLING on the floor, smearing the tiles with entrails.

BLAM!

Demoman SHOOTS him point-blank in the head, blasting chunks of it all over the floor.

Soldier looks up at the door. Scout-Jaunt, Soldier-Jaunt and Engineer-Jaunt are all struggling to move through at once, all bumping into each other. The Heavy-Jaunt SHOVES them all out of his way.

KA-BLAM!

Soldier SHOOTS him squarely in the chest with the shotgun, the impact making him fall backwards, pinning all the other Jaunts underneath him.

They run past the Jaunts while they’re down, rushing for the exit.

The metal door begins to CLOSE.

They turn around. The Jaunts clamber from the floor and start to lumber towards them again.

Demoman raises the colt and FIRES a few rounds at the Jaunts. It doesn’t do a whole lot of damage. They don’t even seem to care.

Soldier aims for the Soldier-Jaunt’s legs.

KA-BLAM!

Right in the knee. He goes down hard.

Demoman goes for the large light fixture hanging from the ceiling, SHOOTING it down. It falls on top of Engineer-Jaunt, CRUSHING his head while ELECTROCUTING his entire body VIOLENTLY. He bursts into flames before collapsing in a smoking heap.

The Jaunts cry out as they stagger away. They don’t like fire.

Soldier notices this. He sees something sitting on top of the resupply cabinet -- a CAN OF GASOLINE.

He rushes over to it and uses all his strength to push it over. He raises his shotgun as the Heavy-Jaunt and Scout-Jaunt close in.

KA-BLAM!

The second blow to the chest makes Heavy-Jaunt back off.

Soldier HEAVES the cabinet as hard as he can, and it falls right on top of Scout-Jaunt, CRUSHING him easily into a bloody pulp.

The can of gasoline spills all over the ground, right next to the flames.

KA-BOOM!

The fiery explosion takes out Heavy-Jaunt’s top-half. His legs tumble backwards in a crumpled heap.

Flames catch on Soldier’s legless body. He SCREAMS HORRIBLY as the fire rips into his flesh.

Demoman lowers the colt to the Jaunt’s head.

BLAM!

The shutter OPENS behind them.

INT. MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS 49

Demoman bolts out of the armory and bashes his foot manically against the cold steel door blocking their way out of the building. The racket starts to piss Soldier off.

SOLDIER
(irritated)
STOP IT!

Demoman stops, hopelessly pressing his head against the door.

SOLDIER
(low voice)
Don’t you get it? We’re trapped.
He’s trying to kill us.

A mechanical whine from above catches their attention as they look up to see a SECURITY CAMERA watching them from from a dark corner in the ceiling.

Demo raises his gun and SHOOTS it. A confetti of metal fragments fall to the ground.

Soldier goes outside to get some air. He cools off in the rain. He turns his head to the bottom of the stairs.

The Creature’s body is GONE.

Soldier runs back into the room.

INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS 50

Fritz runs up the stairs with the briefcase tucked under his arm, daring not to look back at the thundering footsteps behind him. He hits a dead end at the top of the stairs -- a locked door. He bangs on the metal sheet with his free hand.

FRITZ
HELLO?! SOMEONE! HELP ME!

INT. MAIN ROOM ROOM - CONTINUOUS 51

Soldier and Demoman spin around to look at the door, startled by the noises coming from behind. Demoman signals to Soldier to go check it out.

INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE - CONTINUOUS 52

Desperate, Fritz pulls away from the door and hides in a dark corner, clutching the briefcase to his chest. He shuts his eyes as the footsteps come closer.

STOMP.

STOMP.

STOMP.

INT. MAIN ROOM - CONTINUOUS 53

Soldier puts his ear to the door, trying to hear what's going on...

Suddenly, the wall EXPLODES, sending chunks of wood flying in all directions and showering Soldier and Demoman in dust and debris.

We see the BEHEMOTH, **STALINGRAD** -- TEN TIMES THE SIZE of his former self, filling out his black suit with GIANT MUSCULAR ENHANCEMENTS.

Soldier, bewildered, raises his shotgun. Stalingrad rips it out of his hands easily and tosses it across the room. He then GRABS Soldier by the head and lifts him high into the air.

SOLDIER
(muffled)
SHOOT IT! SHOOT IT!

Demoman shakily aims for the face and FIRES. The shot KNOCKS OFF HIS FEDORA.

That pisses him off. He drops Soldier and LUNGES for Demoman and GRABS him by the torso, easily lifting him up in the air. He SLAMS him into the wall VIOLENTLY before THROWING him into Soldier, KNOCKING him back down to the floor.

Stalingrad then grabs a tall statue standing in the corner of the room, and pushes against it, ripping the foundation out of the floor. It topples on top of Soldier and Demoman, TRAPPING them underneath.

Fritz watches on from the hole in the wall.

DING!

The elevator doors slide open. A way out for Fritz.

(CONTINUED)

Fritz has to make a decision -- take action or escape.

He draws the small screwdriver from his pocket.

FRITZ
HEY!

Stalingrad turns around. He looks down at Fritz, intrigued, but with a menacing jowl. Fritz takes a step back, intimidated.

STALINGRAD
(muffled)
Builders League...

Stalingrad notices the BRIEFCASE, still clasped in Fritz’s hand.

He reaches forward and GRABS him, lifting him up close to study his face.

Fritz, struggling, manages to free one hand. He BRANDISHES the screwdriver and PLUNGES it into Stalingrad’s eye.

He CRIES OUT HORRIBLY as BLACK BLOOD SPURTS out onto Fritz’s clothing. He lets him go and DROPS to the floor, putting all his weight onto one fist while covering his face with the other hand.

FRITZ
(to Soldier and Demoman)
GO!

They crawl out from the rubble, grab their weapons and sprint towards the elevator.

Fritz takes the case and hauls himself up. Stalingrad rears his massive head and RISES to his feet.

Fritz DIVES into the elevator just as Stalingrad LUNGES for him. As the it shuts, a tremendous CLANG CAVES IN the steel doors.

There is a MECHANICAL SHUNT as the elevator lowers into the abyss.

It’s quiet. Everyone’s doubled over, PANTING, clutching their wounds.

Fritz SLAMS his fist into the wall, CURSING under his breath.

Soldier and Demoman share a look.

The elevator suddenly SHUDDERS to a sudden HALT. The fluorescent overhead light FLICKERS OUT.

CUT TO BLACK

FADE IN

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS 54

Total darkness.

Fritz is crouched in the corner, sobbing into his sleeves. Soldier and Demoman shoot each other glances.

Soldier pulls the packet of cigarettes out of his pocket. There’s one left. He hands it to Fritz.

Fritz eyes it for a second. He doesn’t, but he takes it anyway and puts it to his lips. Soldier lights it up for him.

As he inhales the smoke, he starts to giggle again.

Soldier and Demoman don’t know what to make of it.

Fritz looks Soldier in the eyes -- the Kubrick stare.

Smiling.

Soldier stares back. The corners of his mouth start to go up. Now he’s smiling.

They both break out into laughter.

Demoman laughs too, nervously. He doesn’t get the joke.

W.S. -- The elevator is a tiny little rectangle, sliding down a seemingly infinite black void.

FADE OUT

CHAPTER FIVE: THE DOORWAY

FADE IN

EXT. DESERT FIELD - EVENING 55

A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT.

A large man slumps to the ground; a bag over his head and his arms tied around his back. Blood seeps from his shirt.

(CONTINUED)

We see three other mercenaries lined up against the wall, also bagged and tied. The wall is covered in DRIED BLOOD.

A pair of chubby hands fiddle with a REVOLVER before loading the chamber. We see who it belongs to; JULES ARCHIBALD.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Corporal, come over here.

A shadowy figure approaches him.

JULES ARCHIBALD
You wanted a promotion, here it is.

He puts the gun in his hands.

MURNAU
What’s the charge?

JULES ARCHIBALD
Treason.

We see that the man is Murnau. He approaches the second mercenary.

JULES ARCHIBALD
What’s it going to take, Corporal?

(pause)

MURNAU
I want a new car.

BANG! He shoots him in the chest, killing him instantly.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Done. Anything else?

MURNAU
My own personal assistant.

BANG! The next one suffers the same.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Anything you like, Corporal.

He lowers the revolver on the final mercenary. He hesitates for a long while.

JULES ARCHIBALD
How about a vacation, old boy?

MURNAU
I think I’ve earned it.

BANG!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DARKNESS - UNKNOWN TIME 56

Murnau SCREAMS as a clear liquid SPLASHES over his face, JARRING him awake. He SPLUTTERS and GAGS. His hands are tied to the back of a chair.

A figure in the dark drops a CAN OF GASOLINE to the floor. A gloved hand reaches out and RIPS OFF HIS BALACLAVA.

The Masked Man emerges from the shadows. He picks up Murnau’s revolver off a table somewhere, looks at it for a moment, then points it at his head. Murnau struggles against his restraints.

The Masked Man changes his mind, putting down the revolver. He strolls over to the far corner of the room and picks up a BLOODY BONESAW. Murnau frantically tries to turn and see what he has.

MURNAU
You think you can get away with this?!

The blade doesn’t satisfy The Masked Man. He instead moves to the other side, looking up at a FIRE AXE, firmly planted into the wall.

MURNAU
Builders League will destroy you for what you’ve done!

The Masked Man pulls the fire axe out and feels the weight of it in his gloved hands.

MURNAU
Don’t you get it you mute freak? I’M A PROTECTED MAN!

The Masked Man rests the head of the axe on Murnau’s shoulder.

MURNAU
(whispering)
What do you want?

(CONTINUED)

Long pause, then he stands in front of Murnau. He raises his hands to his face and TAKES OFF THE MASK.

Murnau is HORRIFIED. The Masked Man backs away into the shadows and pulls out a lighter. Giggles scrape through his teeth as he SPARKS the lighter under his face.

It’s HORRIFICALLY BURNT. We only catch a glimpse, but the face is completely inhuman.

He CLOSES the lighter. Everything goes quiet in the darkness.

INT. UNDERGROUND - CONTINUOUS 57

DING!

The doors SLIDE OPEN. Soldier grabs his shotgun, gets to his feet and pulls out the flashlight. It doesn’t reveal much.

Suddenly, a HORRIFYING SCREAM echoes through the darkness. It’s a familiar scream Soldier’s heard before.

SOLDIER
(whispering to himself)
I don’t believe it.

He turns to Demoman.

SOLDIER
On your feet, Cyclops.

DEMOMAN
I think I lost me piece.

SOLDIER
Can’t go back for it now.

Soldier turns to Fritz, eyes down and unmoved.

SOLDIER
(knowingly)
You don’t work for the Conaghers, do you?

FRITZ
I killed the Conaghers.

SOLDIER
Who gave you that order?

FRITZ
They tried to kill me. Is that enough?

He looks down at the briefcase tucked under Fritz’s arm.

SOLDIER
That doesn’t belong to you.

FRITZ
I can explain.

DEMOMAN (O.S.)
I can’t see a bloody thing!

SOLDIER
(to Fritz)
Don’t move.

Soldier cocks his shotgun and heads off down the dark passageway. Fritz waits until he’s far away...

...He pulls out Demoman’s pistol. He eyes the piece curiously, pulling back the hammer.

INT. CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS 58

Soldier and Demoman continue on, creeping into a large dugout room filled with about a dozen STEEL CAGES; some kind of prison complex.

SOLDIER
He’s gotta be a sleeper agent. I know their type.

DEMOMAN
I saw the devil in them eyes, man.

There is a HUM of low voices, WHISPERING, WEEPING.

SOLDIER
How far down are we?

DEMOMAN
We’re practically buried alive, lad.

Another sound... *sobbing.*

SOLDIER
You hear that?

Soldier peers into one of the cells, trying to make out a figure in the darkness.

It’s a large man, cowering in the corner.

SOLDIER
Mr. Archibald?

The man turns his head. He gets to his feet and stumbles into the light.

It *is* Jules Archibald.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Oh, thank God -- a rescue. You have to get me out of here before I contract something.

SOLDIER
Are you injured, sir?

JULES ARCHIBALD
I’m about to have a heart attack. Now are you going to stand there or can you unlock this bloody door?

DEMOMAN
(laughing)
You’re right where you belong, ya fat crooked bastard!

JULES ARCHIBALD
Smart bloody leper, aren’t you? Soldier, why are you dragging this corpse around?

DEMOMAN
What the hell’d this man call me?

SOLDIER
He’s been handy, sir.

JULES ARCHIBALD
He’s got none left! Are you conspiring with the enemy, Soldier?

SOLDIER
I’m just trying to help, sir.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Then stop wasting my time!

A door suddenly opens somewhere, shutting everybody up. A harsh metal scraping echoes through the halls.

Demoman backs away and sees a sign above a large doorway that says **’BAR’** in glowing letters. This intrigues him.

He heads off into the doorway. The sign above flickers to reveal more letters, and we see that it actually says **’LABORATORY’**.

Soldier stares down the end of the hall for what seems like ages.

A WHEELCHAIR rolls slowly from around the corner, squeaking past and disappearing down the other end of the corridor.

Soldier approaches slowly and looks down the right side of the hallway. Nothing.

He looks down the other side. There is no wheelchair.

Confused, Soldier heads back to Archibald’s cell.

He peers inside, stumped -- then alarmed.

Archibald is gone.

SOLDIER
Mr. Archibald?

Soldier calls out into the darkness, his words met with complete silence.

SOLDIER
Cyclops?

His eyes catch a figure inside another cell, raised high off the ground.

It turns around slowly, then Soldier sees what it is.

A HANGING CORPSE.

Soldier’s mouth hangs open, his widened eyes fixated on the body.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS 59

Fritz has the colt pointed at his own head, longing to pull the trigger -- but he just can’t bring himself to do it.

He rises to his feet, turning to look at the large reflective mirror on the elevator wall. He stares at his own reflection with disgust.

FRITZ
You want me to do it, don’t you?
But I won’t -- you can’t make me.

A long pause. Fritz’s eyes widen in rage.

FRITZ
YOU CAN’T MAKE ME!

He raises the gun and FIRES at the mirror, SHATTERING it with a huge CRACK. The BANG echoes through the cavern and the shock throws Fritz off his feet. He grabs the briefcase and runs off down the tunnel.

INT. CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS 60

Soldier, shell-shocked, turns to the sound of the shot.

He sees another figure in the dark. The Young Soldier, only without a visible face.

He shakes violently. His fingers long and clawed.

BLOOD runs down Soldier’s face. He backs away slowly.

INT. LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS 61

DEMOMAN
Oh... I’d sell me soul for a drink.

Demo looks up into the mirror on the wall, and is taken aback by what he sees.

His left eye has miraculously GROWN BACK.

He looks into the mirror -- both eyes dead into the camera.

DEMOMAN
Hello, DELL! Long night, eh?

The THIRD BROTHER - DELL CONAGHER, dressed in a dapper red tuxedo, stands behind the bar with his arms folded - smiling.

DELL
Longer than you think.

He lays his hands on the counter.

DELL
Care for a drink?

DEMOMAN
Love one.

Dell reaches below the bar and brandishes a tall bottle of whiskey and a glass. He lays it down and begins to pour.

DEMOMAN
I thought you were miles away, lad. Where you been hiding?

DELL
Who says I've been hiding?

DEMOMAN
Your brothers thought you were dead.

Dell pauses, then suddenly LAUGHS, shaking his head. Demo's blood goes ice cold.

DELL
Relapse is a hell of thing, ain't it?

DEMOMAN
Too right.

Demo drinks from the glass. He looks around the room, confused. He listens closer. It sounds like something WAILING from a great distance.

DEMOMAN
(muttering)
"Longer than you think..."

DELL
It is.

DEMOMAN
What?

DELL
When they figured out how to bring us back, some of us would tell stories about what we saw on the other side. We saw old friends. Family. Mostly strangers. I spoke to my grandfather. He's been dead for thirty years.

DEMOMAN
What’d he tell ye?

DELL
"It’s eternity in there."

CROSSFADE TO:

INT. EAST HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 62

Fritz’s ears ring from the shot. Up ahead, he sees a figure standing in a doorway behind a plastic curtain.

Fritz slowly moves towards it. He parts the curtain with one hand and looks inside the room.

INT. RESPAWN CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS 63

It’s a claustrophobic cube bathed in harsh, industrial red lights. Empty. A huge steel door marked **’CONTAINMENT’** blocks the way ahead.

To Fritz’s left, a large metal shutter with a neon sign above reads **’RESPAWN’.** The shutter is covered in blood.

The door on the right leads to a short corridor. An ominous black rectangle looms on the far wall.

Fritz stares at it with wonder and intrigue.

The monolithic supercomputer makes strange noises as Fritz moves closer towards it. He touches its smooth black surface.

Suddenly, the screen activates.

"HELIX TECHNOLOGIES: RESPAWN TERMINAL"

Glowing red text crawls along in thin lines:

> RUNNING STARTUP PROGRAM . . .

> LOCALIZING DATA . . .

> SEARCHING . . .

> [1] FILE FOUND . . .

> WARNING ! FILE CORRUPTION DETECTED .

> PROCEED ? [Y / N]

(CONTINUED)

Fritz stares at the word for a long time.

The ghost of Scout’s mother stands behind him in the doorway.

Fritz turns back. There’s no one there.

The Respawn Machine is idle. Waiting.

Fritz looks at the screen again.

> PROCEED ? [Y / N]

A keyboard slides out of the monolith, just below the screen.

Fritz almost reaches for it, biting down on his knuckle.

EXT. WEST HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 64

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
Blutarch? Blutarch, can you hear me?

Soldier, wandering down an endless corridor, perks up at the familiar voice trailing from the far end.

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
Lower your voice, Blutarch! I can hear you just fine! Am I coming through clear?

Soldier approaches a circular doorway and steps through.

INT. COMMAND ROOM - CONTINUOUS 65

A massive room with electronic maps of the United States covering the walls. In the middle of the room is a large round table with about two dozen SKELETONS in leather chairs. They are all dressed in old black suits and draped with cobwebs.

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
No, Blutarch - this is a *telephone* call. Much faster than air-mail. Blutarch, we... what do you mean "who is this?". It’s *Jules Archibald*. We last spoke in Dallas after *you-know-what*, remember? Yes, I’m calling about the *project* we discussed.

(CONTINUED)

The voice is coming from a rotary telephone at an empty chair.

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
No, not the pregnancy machine. The *other* one. Yes... there's been a slight hiccup, so-to-speak. The Respawn Machine works - it technically works, Blutarch. However...

Soldier pulls back the chair cautiously and takes a seat. He picks up the phone curiously and puts it to his ear. He takes notice of a spinning tape machine hooked up next to it; presumably playback of an old recording.

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
No - you see, that's the problem. They say we've lost about ninety percent of the test subjects.

BLUTARCH MANN (O.S.)
(through phone)
WHAT?!

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
I-- I know you're upset, Blutarch, but the good news is we found about ten of them that are *Respawn Compatible!*

A distant GUNSHOT rattles through the phone. Soldier winces.

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
Er... hold on a moment.
(covering the receiver, yelling out)
What the hell is going on? He shot himself? Oh bloody hell, just throw him in the pit with the others.
(back on the phone)
Excuse me -- *nine*, Blutarch.

BLUTARCH MANN (O.S.)
(through phone)
You promised me an army, Archibald! How am I supposed to defeat my brother with a BASEBALL TEAM?

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
Well, think of the money you'll save -- mercenaries are very cheap these days! With a Respawn Machine

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.) (cont'd)
on every frontline, there'll be no worry! You'll surely win this war by the end of the financial year!

BLUTARCH MANN (O.S.)
We must not allow a Respawn Gap!

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
A Respawn Gap? You must be joking!

BLUTARCH MANN (O.S.)
(through phone)
Think about it!

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
Blutarch, I really must be going now. Listen - would you be interested in a new heart? Liver? Spleen? We have about eight hundred thousand corpses on site and we're not really sure what to do with them.

BLUTARCH MANN (O.S.)
(through phone)
Oh! I'll take one of each!

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
I see. I'll put it on the bill. Ta-ta, Blutarch.

The phone goes dead. Soldier looks up at the board with the United States map and notices the dots of red light on it are disappearing one by one.

Except for the one in New Mexico. It's glowing even brighter.

Suddenly, the phone redials. Soldier tries to listen over the harsh static taking over the line.

JULES ARCHIBALD (O.S.)
Redmond? Jules Archibald. I have a proposition for you...

Their voices vanish into a hiss of white noise.

Soldier looks across the table. All the skeletons have turned their heads, looking right back at him.

INT. RESPAWN CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS 66

Fritz’s shaking hand hovers over the ’Y’ key. He shuts his eyes.

FRITZ
(whispering)
Please.

He taps the key.

At once, the Terminal lights up. More text scrolls across the screen:

> INITIATING MANUAL RESPAWN . . .

The entire chamber GROANS.

> SEQUENCING GENOME . . . 100%

> LOADING ADENINE . . . 100%

> LOADING CYTOSINE . . . 100%

> LOADING GUANINE . . . 100%

> LOADING THYMINE . . . 100%

> MODELING ANATOMY . . . 100%

Steel pistons GRUNT and EJECT STEAM.

> REBUILDING SKELETAL STRUCTURE . . . 100%

> INSTALLING CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM . . . 100%

> THREADING MUSCLE TISSUE . . . 100%

Tesla coils JOLT with massive SPARKS of electricity.

> RESTARTING METABOLIC FUNCTION . . . 100%

> RESPAWNING . . .

The Respawn Machine glows RED HOT.

> WARNING ! FATAL ERROR !

> ENTITY UNKNOWN !

An INHUMAN SCREAM rattles from behind the Respawn door.

Fritz backs against the Terminal wall.

(CONTINUED)

Someone -- *or something* -- KNOCKS on the door from the inside.

Fritz is HORRIFIED.

The door OPENS.

A TORRENT OF BLOOD POURS OUT.

INT. COMMAND ROOM - CONTINUOUS 67

The entire room SHUDDERS. All the lights SHUT OFF.

Confused, Soldier notices a RED DOT creeping over his jacket, moving over his face and shining right in his eyes.

He DUCKS just in time to avoid a BULLET SMASHING the tape recorder into a thousand pieces.

CRASH!

A tall figure in the dark reloads with a METALLIC SNAP.

Soldier SHOOTS BACK across the table with his shotgun.

BOOM!

The figure is BLASTED by shrapnel, recoiling.

Soldier spots a door and makes a break for it.

The figure takes aim and FIRES.

A BULLET HITS SOLDIER IN THE LEG.

He SCREAMS, throwing the door open and SLAMMING it behind him.

The figure calmly hobbles over to the telephone. His right leg has been replaced with a metal pole.

CLANK!

CLANK!

CLANK!

He picks up the receiver and dials a number, putting it to his ear.

INT. INFIRMARY - CONTINUOUS 68

Murnau and The Masked Man sit apart and coldly stare at each other in the dark.

The Masked Man flicks the lighter on and off.

A PHONE RINGS. The Masked Man turns around and steps into the dark.

Suddenly, sparks start to fly from Murnau’s wrist. His watch is acting up again.

The Masked Man answers the black rotary in the corner.

THE HUNTER (O.S.)
(through phone)
He’s here. Got him cornered.

Slowly but surely, his entire body becomes see-through. The cloak seeps through his skin, as if the darkness were swallowing him whole.

THE MASKED MAN
(muffled)
Where?

THE HUNTER (O.S.)
Cryo Lab. He won’t get far.

The Masked Man puts the phone down and turns back. Murnau is GONE. The Masked Man stares at the empty chair, MOTIONLESS, unable to comprehend. He SHUDDERS mechanically for a moment before KICKING the chair over. A GRUNT comes from the side of the room, which The Masked Man snaps to almost immediately.

He looks down at the axe. Pieces of rope from the restraints lay about the blade.

Then, out of nowhere--

CLANG!

The gasoline can collides with the back of his head. He staggers backwards into the wall. The revolver, as if on strings, rises from the table and aims directly at The Masked Man.

Murnau suddenly UNCLOAKS.

BANG! BANG! BANG! The Masked Man GOES DOWN HARD.

After a moment of dead silence, Murnau bends down to pick up his hat before leaving the room.

INT. EAST HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 69

He shuts the door behind him and takes out another cigarette, lighting it up. After a moment, he plucks it out of his mouth and tosses it behind him.

The cigarette tumbles through the air, landing on the floor -- *in a puddle of gasoline.*

Murnau turns to look at a small fire, and he realizes that he’s left an ENTIRE TRAIL of gasoline behind him. The flames start to chase him.

He tries to run for it, but the slug in his shin cripples him. He falls to the ground.

The flames are on him now. He SCREAMS as the fire RIPS through his clothes, his skin, his face, his hair.

He rolls over an embankment and falls into a pit of water below, SIZZLING as steam rises into the air.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. RESPAWN CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS 70

Fritz uncovers his eyes to look at the Respawn door.

The knocking has stopped.

The door is slightly opened.

Something rolls out below. A BASEBALL.

INT. RESPAWN UNIT - CONTINUOUS 71

A HAND appears from underneath the shutter.

It’s Fritz. He throws open the door, looking inside.

He hyperventilates at what he sees.

INT. SCOUT’S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 72

It’s exactly as he remembered it. Trashed. Overturned furniture. Signs of struggle.

The Respawn Door SLAMS SHUT behind Fritz.

A shadow moves from around the corner to the hallway.

Fritz moves in slowly. The room is completely silent apart from his breathing. Not even his footsteps make a sound.

Inching forward, he peeks around the corner.

Within the hallway stands a rectangular medical screen.

A light from the other side casts shadows of two figures.

Fritz approaches the screen and peeks through the frame.

INT. HOSPITAL - EARLIER THAT NIGHT 73

Fritz is watching himself have the same conversation with Scout only hours ago. He hides behind the medical screen.

SCOUT
Well, I was in the bathroom. And as I was brushing my teeth, all my teeth started to fall out. There was blood all over the basin -- it was horrible!

Fritz peers through the crack of the screen. He sees Scout -- *alive.*

THE OTHER FRITZ
Are you worried about something?

SCOUT
Yeah, actually. Do you ever get the feeling like you’re being watched?

Fritz trips over something and tries to keep his balance. His other self looks up at the shadows moving over the screen.

THE OTHER FRITZ
What do you mean?

Fritz stays as still as he can, trying to get his breathing under control. None of this can be real -- *can it?*

The Other Fritz packs up and gets to his feet, stretching.

(CONTINUED)

THE OTHER FRITZ
It’s getting late. Come on, I’ll give you a ride.

Fritz gasps. He cannot allow them to leave. He pushes on the screen, trying to break through, but a cardboard box is blocking the way. It topples, and a large stack of VHS tapes clatter loudly onto the floor.

The Other Fritz and Scout suddenly turn around.

Did it work...?

THE OTHER FRITZ
Ah, forget about it. Come on, before it gets dark.

Fritz watches them both walk away. Fed up, he crashes through the screen and RUNS AFTER THEM.

He SCREAMS, but he can’t hear his own voice.

They disappear through the double doors. Fritz goes through after them, but they’re not there.

Instead, he sees a man -- hunched over a body.

The man turns around to face Fritz.

It’s HIMSELF -- only he has NO EYES.

And he SMILES.

INT. RESPAWN CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS 74

Fritz wakes up next to the Terminal in a cold sweat.

Up ahead, somebody walks into the corridor.

Somebody on FIRE -- carrying a HUGE AXE.

Fritz grabs the briefcase and aims his pistol at the Masked Man.

The flames do nothing to impede his stride.

Fritz’s eyes fall on a set of double-doors next to him, fastened with an old padlock.

He shoots the lock.

BANG!

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS 75

Fritz bursts into the room and slams the double doors closed behind him. He looks around inside the dark, abandoned church -- looking for a place to hide.

He spots a confessional booth and quickly ducks inside.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - CONTINUOUS 76

Fritz buries himself in the corner of the little cubicle, shutting his eyes.

Fritz looks up at a bust of Hippocrates on the cubicle wall. The gold inscription reads: ***'DO NO HARM'***

SOMETHING -- *or SOMEONE* -- passes a CRUCIFIX NECKLACE through the port under the screen.

Fritz picks it up; bewildered. Who is on the other side?

INT. FREEZER ROOM - CONTINUOUS 77

Soldier crawls through the white blizzard of snow, through the plastic curtain into the next room.

He stumbles, falling against a large cylinder encased in frosted glass.

He reaches out and wipes down the fog. Inside, an unconscious man is floating, completely submerged in a dark fluid. His body is fastened with long tubes connected to his head and limbs.

Soldier stares at the submerged man with FRIGHTENED EYES. He slowly turns and realizes the entire room is filled with cylinders, all containing a person within them.

Then, his eyes fall on a man in a red jacket lying up against the wall.

Demo SHIVERS in the corner, covered in FROST.

His WHITE EYES stare blankly into space.

Soldier collapses to the floor. Weakened by the cold, he crawls towards Demo and grabs at his jacket, trying to jostle him awake.

CRASH!

The freezer door SMASHES OPEN.

(CONTINUED)

STOMP.

STOMP.

STOMP.

Soldier looks at Demo’s hand, clasping a GRENADE. He grabs at it, but it’s frozen to Demo’s palm.

Soldier looks back. Through the mist, the towering black mass of Stalingrad moves ever closer.

He gives Demo one last nod and PULLS THE PIN.

Stalingrad steps into the room, glaring through the mist at Demo’s dying body. Demo chuckles with the last air in his lungs.

He DROPS THE GRENADE, releasing the safety lever. It falls at Stalingrad’s feet.

INT. MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 78

BOOM!

An EXPLOSION ROCKS the building and Soldier CRIES OUT as he collapses to the floor.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - CONTINUOUS 79

Fritz throws the necklace over his head.

At that moment, the wooden wall next to Fritz’s head EXPLODES. The Masked Man’s gloved hand grabs him by the throat and pulls him out, holding him up high.

He raises his other hand, the one that’s on fire, and grabs Fritz’s face, watching him reel from the heat of burnt skin.

Fritz SCREAMS.

INT. MAIN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 80

Soldier stumbles as far as his he can, away from the fire.

The Hunter emerges from the wreckage, LAUGHING MANIACALLY.

Soldier turns, HORRIFIED.

The Hunter brandishes a ROCKET LAUNCHER.

BLAM!

Soldier throws himself to the ground before a ROCKET FIZZLES PAST HIS HEAD, trailing down the hallway.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS 81

BOOM! The wall next to Fritz and The Masked Man explodes. They both fall to the floor. Fritz clutches at his throat and tries to crawl over to his gun. The Masked Man grabs the fire axe.

Fritz hurls himself out of the way as The Masked Man brings the axe down, missing his head by inches. Fritz rolls over and raises his gun up, shooting The Masked Man in the eye-holes of his mask.

BANG! BANG!

The Masked Man SCREAMS in SHEER AGONY. Blood runs down his mask and retardant suit. He drops the axe and grabs at his face.

He swipes at the air, trying to grab Fritz -- but he’s quicker. He grabs the axe and LOBS it at The Masked Man’s leg. He manages to break his knee and The Masked Man topples to the ground helplessly.

Fritz, in a fit of rage, raises the axe high above his head and with a mighty heave, brings it down onto The Masked Man’s neck.

KA-SPLAT!

The head shoots off like a wine cork and blood sprays out in all directions. Fritz sighs and drops the axe to the ground with a loud clatter.

He hears APPLAUSE behind him.

Fritz turns to see the church pews lined with PEOPLE IN BLACK SUITS AND MASKS -- ALL CLAPPING.

INT. VOID - CONTINUOUS 82

Murnau climbs out of the murky water, rolling back onto the embankment. He is completely cloaked in shadow.

Steam wafts from his body. He CROAKS, his throat charred and raspy like sandpaper.

He drags himself back to the edge of the water and looks at his own reflection. HE SCREAMS. We still don't get to see.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - CONTINUOUS 83

Murnau watches CCTV footage of Jules Archibald talking on a payphone inside the Execution Chamber.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Goldman, I'm in a fix and you *have* to get me out of it! I *cannot* go to trial! I simply won't! I'm already on thin ice with the Old Mann, and if any word gets out about that godforsaken asylum, I'll be sued into oblivion -- maybe even hung! And worse yet, my chances for re-election will be ruined! I am not going down for a *war crime*!
(listening, then annoyed)

So what if I sold the Respawn Machine to Old Mann's brother? The war is their business, and mine is to drag it out for as long as humanly possible. That infernal -- *unholy* contraption is my lifeline, Goldman.
(listening, then grimly)

Oh, I've thought about it, surely -- as a last resort, but if I can use it to disappear for a while, it's a chance I'll have to take.

A sudden GUNSHOT OBLITERATES the monitor screen.

INT. EXECUTION CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS 84

Jules fiddles with a bottle of pills.

JULES ARCHIBALD
(still on the phone)

Where am I calling from? That's a stupid question -- you know bloody hell where I am!
(listening)

Kidnapped? I don't know anything about that! Listen very carefully,

(MORE) (CONTINUED)

JULES ARCHIBALD (cont'd)
Goldman -- I think there are people trying to kill me! And worse yet, I think this Valium is actually--

The phone line cuts out.

OPERATOR
(through phone)
To continue this call, please deposit five cents.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Oh, blast!

Jules slams the phone back on the receiver.

He pokes into the coin return of a vending machine and pulls out a small coin. He grins -- right before it slips out from his fat fingers.

The coin rolls underneath a steel shutter.

He lifts up the shutter with great difficulty, dusting himself down.

He looks down at his waistcoat and palms -- covered in dark blood.

Frozen, he looks through the open shutter, shocked at what he sees inside. He slowly backs out of the room.

INT. DARK TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS 85

Jules stumbles down a dark passageway and almost screams as he sees something up ahead.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Who the hell are you?

A tall figure in a hat and coat stands in the shadows.

MURNAU
It's me, Jules.

JULES ARCHIBALD
(recognizing)
Oh, thank God, Corporal! You've come to save me.

MURNAU
Have I? I've always been the one to save you, Archie. I did your dirty work and hid it from everyone and *look what it did to me.*

He steps into the light. His entire face and head are HORRIFICALLY BURNED. His eyeballs seem to bulge out of their sockets and his teeth grin menacingly through charred muscle with no lips to cover them.

JULES ARCHIBALD
My God!

MURNAU
Who was there to save me, Jules? You've never cared about anyone but yourself.

JULES ARCHIBALD
Corporal, no -- please. For God's sake...

MURNAU
Well, there's no one here to protect you now.

JULES ARCHIBALD
But I've given you everything you've wanted!

MURNAU
And I'm giving you exactly what you deserve.

He raises his revolver and SHOOTS Archibald in the head. He falls to the ground -- **DEAD.**

Murnau takes a long drag of his cigarette and watches the smoke trail out what's left of his mouth. He is no longer Jacques Murnau -- he is THE SMOKER.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. DARKROOM - CONTINUOUS 86

Soldier BARGES through a door and SLAMS it shut, BEATING the wall with his fist in frustration.

He looks around for a light switch and finds a button by the door. He presses it.

(CONTINUED)

A FILM PROJECTOR TURNS ON. A screen at the end of the room LIGHTS UP, illuminating a row of plastic chairs.

Confused, Soldier approaches the screen, watching.

A man appears on the film, smoking a large cigar. -- It’s JULES ARCHIBALD.

JULES ARCHIBALD
(on film)
I’m on? Alright, fine.

He ditches the cigar, then prepares himself.

JULES ARCHIBALD
(on film)
Hello again! If you’re watching this, then I can say with complete certainty that you have passed Respawn Compatibility!
Congratulations. If you’re confused, allow me to explain:
Before you were lawfully executed by the state, you signed a contract effectively donating your mortal remains to a medical trial. The good news is -- you’re not on death row anymore -- since you’re technically already dead, which also means you are now company property -- but fear not. As promised, you all have a new job waiting for you when you get out.
You are now ten of the strongest mercenaries money can buy, and your sacrifice will reward you in time.
I’ll see you all on the other side.

He turns around, noticing a fire has started behind him.

JULES ARCHIBALD
(on film)
Oh -- hell!

The film cuts off. Soldier discovers a dozen photos littered on a steel sink -- distorted figures hunched over in the dark. Soldier recognizes a few of them, but not all.

EXT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 87

A POV shot follows a trail of blood left through the corridor.

Step... Clank... Step... Clank...

INT. DARKROOM - CONTINUOUS 88

Soldier’s attention turns to a negative overturned in the basin, floating in dark tap water.

He fishes the photo out, startled by the image.

Jules Archibald holding a revolver at somebody’s head.

Soldier’s head. *It’s not possible.*

The door SLAMS open. Soldier spins around. The Hunter stands in the doorway, pointing the rocket launcher towards its owner.

THE HUNTER
You really wanna die for that fat bastard? Don’t you wanna die for something worth dying for?

Soldier just stares at him.

THE HUNTER
Do you have any idea how long I’ve waited for this? *Longer than you think.*

Soldier’s eyes go to the door. The Hunter turns around.

The Masked Man’s head pokes around the corner.

THE HUNTER
What took you so long?

The Hunter walks over to the door. The Masked Man’s head DROPS TO THE FLOOR.

An AXE comes FLYING around the corner, STRIKING The Hunter in the chest. He SCREAMS, dropping the rocket launcher and falling to the floor.

Soldier raises his shotgun and points it at his head.

THE HUNTER
See you on the other side.

BOOM! The Hunter’s head EXPLODES.

Fritz and Soldier stand in silence for a moment.

FRITZ
(to Soldier)
Why did you come here?

SOLDIER
I was trying to save somebody.

FRITZ
So was I.

A low **BOOM** shakes the darkroom.

FRITZ
We shouldn’t be here.

Suddenly, the projector STARTS UP AGAIN. Fritz and Soldier look towards the screen.

A blue sphere fades in: **EMESIS PHARMACEUTICALS**.

Then... **THE JULES ARCHIBALD FOUNDATION**.

A REVOLVER SLAMS into the back of Fritz’s head. He collapses to the floor, knocked out cold.

A tall dark figure in a coat and hat stands over him.

CUT TO BLACK

CHAPTER SIX: KATABASIS

FADE IN

INT. EXECUTION CHAMBER - SOME TIME LATER 89

Fritz wakes up at a table across from Soldier. He groans as he looks around, straight up at the horrifically charred face of The Smoker.

THE SMOKER
Hello, doctor.

Fritz screams. The Smoker slams the briefcase on the table before pulling his gun on him.

THE SMOKER
Open it.

FRITZ
...I can’t.

The Smoker cocks the hammer back.

THE SMOKER
I insist.

FRITZ
It’s not mine.

THE SMOKER
Liar!

SOLDIER
Tell him how you got the case, Fritz.

FRITZ
I stole it.

The Smoker WHIPS him across the face with the revolver.

THE SMOKER
Impossible.

SOLDIER
(to The Smoker)
Forget this! Where’s Archibald?

THE SMOKER
Archibald is *dead!*

He turns to face Soldier now. He’s horrified.

THE SMOKER
(pointing to Fritz)
Everything this man has told you is a lie. *He killed him... and the boy.*

FRITZ
...No! That’s not true!

THE SMOKER
What is true to you?
(to Soldier)
Or you? Who *ran away?*

Soldier watches the steam rise from The Smoker’s scolding hot shoulders.

THE SMOKER
I am the only sane man here.

SOLDIER
I took a bullet for you.

THE SMOKER
I should have shot you myself!

He checks the revolver chamber....

...One bullet.

THE SMOKER
You all have nothing to live for.

The Smoker gives the chamber a good spin and lays it on the table. He twirls the gun. It points towards Soldier.

THE SMOKER
You first.

He slides it over. Soldier picks up the gun and shakily puts it to his head. He looks at Fritz -- panicking.

...CLICK.

Soldier throws the gun down.

The Smoker chuckles. He takes the gun, points it at his own neck and pulls the trigger in one swift motion.

CLICK.

He almost looks disappointed. He lays it down in front of Fritz.

Shaking, Fritz slowly puts the gun to his throat.

SOLDIER
You’re gonna make it, Fritz.

FRITZ
I know.

...BLAM!

Fritz falls from his chair onto the floor. Dead.

SOLDIER
NO!

The Smoker sighs.

THE SMOKER
Goodbye, Dr. Ludwig.

Soldier fumes wordlessly.

THE SMOKER
Now you know how it feels.
(smiling)
You won.

He gestures to a tunnel exit.

THE SMOKER
Go.

Soldier gets up from his seat and walks over to Fritz's body. He takes one last look before walking into the sewer, towards a source of light -- an exit it seems.

THE SMOKER
And Soldier?

He turns around.

THE SMOKER
I'll see you at the funeral.

The Smoker disappears in a cloud of smoke.

After a moment of dead silence, Soldier throws the table across the room in a sudden rage.

Suddenly, another low ***BOOM.***

Soldier turns to the wall, listening to something HUGE lumbering from the other side.

The only door in the room slams shut. Soldier attempts to open the door, but it is locked from the other side.

BOOM.

Soldier grabs a chair and HURLS it at the glass window, SMASHING it to pieces. He grabs his rocket launcher and climbs through.

Soldier discovers something unexpected. Jules Archibald -- or rather, his dead body -- is strapped to the electric chair in the middle of the chamber.

Another ***BOOM.*** Much closer now.

Soldier leaps through the steel shutter, into the abyss.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. BODY PIT - CONTINUOUS 90

Hands reach out from below and grab at various objects. Soldier hauls himself up onto his feet and gasps at what he sees.

Corpses as far as the eye can see -- stacked a mile high.

In the darkness, TWO HEADLIGHTS fire up and a motor engine groans to life.

Soldier leaps out of the way of a BULLDOZER hurtling towards him. He lands in a pile of bodies, watching the truck roll down the hill of dead soldiers.

Across the mountains of the dead, Soldier watches ANOTHER BULLDOZER stop and raise its shovel high over its cab, dumping a load of bodies into its dumping bed.

The first bulldozer circles back and screams around the corner, gunning its engine full speed towards Soldier.

Backed against the wall, Soldier jumps up onto the pile behind him.

He LEAPS onto the hood of the truck as it careens into the wall, SLAMMING into it.

Soldier climbs over the truck and falls into the bed.

Tucked away inside a stack of corpses -- his rocket launcher.

Soldier grabs the weapon as the truck’s shovel rotates and heaves another pile of bodies into the air.

He looks up in horror, shielding himself as the bodies fall in -- burying him alive.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. TRUCK BED - UNKNOWN 91

Rumbling.

Blackness.

Flashes of light illuminate Soldier’s face, lost underneath a heap of corpses.

(CONTINUED)

Overhead mining lights flicker briefly, then disappear as the truck rolls through a long, narrow tunnel -- deep into the earth.

Demo’s face appears in the light.

DEMOMAN
Our true enemy has yet to reveal himself.

Blackness.

Rumbling.

Then... an ***ALMIGHTY CRASH.***

Soldier is rocked violently as the truck is struck by an unknown force, overturning the hull and landing on its side.

INT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS 92

Soldier climbs to his feet and chokes on thick fumes. The truck cabin has caught fire.

Soldier locates the rocket launcher and arms himself, getting away from the wreckage.

He limps toward a strange light in the distance, stopping himself just before a massive hole in the ground.

The strange light shines from deep within.

Through the haze, Soldier notices the huge crater divides two parts of a bridge. The other side goes to a staircase -- *leading up and out.*

Soldier looks down at his rocket launcher, thinking it over for a moment.

I can make that jump.

I’ve done it before.

Soldier turns around. The wreckage of the truck is moving towards him rapidly.

He leaps out of the way as Stalingrad heaves the bulldozer at his enemy. It misses and careens over the edge of the crater, SMASHING into the rock wall and flaming all the way down.

Soldier barely dodges Stalingrad’s fist, ducking and rolling to the side.

He raises the rocket launcher. Stalingrad grabs the nozzle.

They fight over control of the weapon. Soldier puts every fiber of muscle he has left into his arms as he strenuously angles the nozzle towards Stalingrad’s chest.

He screams.

BLAM!

Stalingrad absorbs the blast and Soldier is thrown across the cavern, flying over the crater.

He crash-lands on the other side.

After a moment of bewilderment, Soldier gathers himself and watches the fire of the explosion left behind.

He stands to his feet and turns back to the stairs.

Someone is standing there.

Soldier recognizes him, but it doesn’t any make sense.

A GUNSHOT RIPS through Soldier’s heart. Blood spatters his face. He falls backwards into the pit.

INT. THE CRYPT - CONTINUOUS 93

Soldier crashes into an enormous body of water down below.

He sinks rapidly.

A moment passes. The water remains still until--

Soldier resurfaces, gasping for air -- *alive.*

He clambers into a large drainpipe and sits up against the rusting steel wall.

His chest is still soaked with blood.

Panicking, Soldier reaches into his jacket -- *pulling out the metal flask.* It has a single bullet hole in it.

Soldier turns the flask over into his palm. The stub of a bullet falls out.

Not blood. *Booze.*

Soldier sighs deeply.

Silence.

Then... *a distant wail*.

Soldier’s blood freezes.

Something approaches from within the darkness.

The wailing gets closer. Louder.

The Entity remains unseen.

Soldier hobbles to his feet, but his entire body goes limp -- overcome with shock.

He crawls through the drainpipe.

The Entity crawls after him.

The drainpipe twists and turns into tight corners. Soldier struggles to move as the drainpipe seems to be getting smaller and narrower.

He forces himself forward. Skin strips from his palms, smearing blood in his path.

The Entity hammers the rusting walls, scraping them with sharp claws -- *screaming with lungs that couldn’t possibly be human.*

It’s right behind Soldier. He dares not look back.

At last, he comes to a ladder, leading up to a sewer grate.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS 94

Soldier climbs out from the sewers and finds himself in an alleyway. Rain slashes his face.

He gets to his feet and approaches the mouth of the alleyway, towards the road.

He looks down at a gutter pipe guzzling rain water -- the water is gathering on the concrete and traveling UP the pipe.

Soldier realizes the rain itself is not falling, but RISING into the sky.

He peers at a blue Schubert parked across the road.

Soldier is sitting in the passenger seat, looking back at himself under the street light.

At the peak of his confusion, the car EXPLODES, knocking Soldier backwards.

EXT. CONAGHER SLAUGHTERHOUSE - NIGHT 95

Soldier falls into a small riverbank.

He stands up and feels rain on his face -- *real rain.* Outside at last.

He takes off his helmet and drops it into the water, limping through the mud towards the open fields.

A tremendous metal GROAN makes him turn around and gaze up.

Conagher Slaughterhouse is a ROARING INFERNO, burning to the ground as flaming debris screams over Soldier’s head.

The main tower LURCHES FORWARD. Wooden beams CRACK and SPLINTER as the structure collapses under its own weight.

The tower is COMING DOWN -- *FAST.*

Soldier gasps at the sight and turns to run.

He makes it only a few feet before he trips, tumbling down a muddy hill and crashing face-first into murky water.

A huge figure punches through the wreckage of the slaughterhouse.

Soldier lifts his head out of the water to see Stalingrad -- scorched red from the waist up -- emerge from the industrial ruins.

Stalingrad locks onto his target and moves at a brisk pace. Soldier throws himself onto his feet and breaks into a run.

He hobbles as fast as he can through the mud, barely dodging flaming debris coming down and crashing all around him as the tower falls lower and lower.

Stalingrad closes in. Soldier cannot outrun him any longer.

WHAM! Stalingrad throws a punch into Soldier’s back, throwing him over a muddy hill. He screams in agony.

An immense shadow falls over Stalingrad. He looks up at the entirety of Conagher Slaughterhouse coming down on top of him.

BOOOOOOM! The massive tower CRUSHES Stalingrad. The earth shakes, and huge clouds of mud and sawdust fly out in all directions.

A loud metallic CRY reverberates through the air.

Soldier SCREAMS back.

He watches the flames of Conagher Slaughterhouse rise high into the night, then passes out.

FADE OUT

CHAPTER SEVEN: BLOOD BROTHERS

FADE IN

INT. BLACK ROOM - SOME TIME LATER 96

Soldier sits across from a man in a black suit. His face is hidden by shadows.

STEMMONS
Mr. Doe, my name is Agent Stemmons. You don’t know me, but I know all about you. I’m here to debrief you on the situation.

Soldier doesn’t respond. He doesn’t even look at him directly.

STEMMONS
Conagher Slaughterhouse is a dead zone. There’s nothing left of it, and I think that’s for the best. It was actually scheduled for demolition months ago, but Governor Archibald prevented that from happening. He had his secrets, Mr. Doe, but you discovered something that we find deeply disturbing; something that threatens the foundation of this company. Whatever it was you saw inside Conagher Slaughterhouse, you are not to speak of it with anyone. Not a soul. Do I make myself clear?

Soldier slowly nods.

STEMMONS
Good. Is there anything else you want to tell me?

Soldier shakes his head.

STEMMONS
Governor Archibald’s funeral is on Sunday. Wear black.

Stemmons goes to leave, then turns back.

STEMMONS
Cheer up, Mr. Doe. I think your friend will pull through.

As Stemmons walks out of the room, we see what Soldier is looking at:

The disfigured body of THE SMOKER -- strapped to a hospital bed, still smoking a cigarette.

FADE OUT

Sunday...

November 3, 1968...

9:57am...

INT. CHURCH - DAY 97

FADE IN

Men and women in black attire find their seats along the church benches. It’s a somber mood as the funeral for Jules Archibald is about to take place. The Smoker, now wrapped in bandages and wearing a white mask, shakes hands with the v.i.p.’s

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Glad you could make it, detective. I’m sorry for your loss. I heard you two were very close.

Soldier is up front in a wheelchair, dressed in a black suit; alone. His leg is in a cast. He’s reading from a small cue card.

C.U.:

"We regret to inform that Jules Archibald was killed following a confrontation with his kidnapper, discovered to be the Chief Medical Advisor of B.L.U., Dr. Fritz Ludwig. Mr. Archibald was shot once by Dr. Ludwig, before turning the gun on himself.

(PAUSE FOR EFFECT)

We were forced to evacuate when a fire had consumed Conagher Slaughterhouse. We believe that Dr. Ludwig became mentally unstable and committed several other murders before his death. Despite this, we are adamant that this cult will be brought to justice."

Soldier flips the card over.

C.U.: ***"FOLLOW THE SCRIPT"***

The official with The Smoker gestures for someone.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Ah, here he is -- the Mann of the hour.

An elderly gentleman in a bulky wheelchair wearing an industrial blue suit wheels towards them, extending a shriveled hand.

OLD MAN
You know who I am.

THE SMOKER
(shaking hands)
Blutarch Mann. Nice to finally meet you.

BLUTARCH MANN
You knew my friend Jules?

THE SMOKER
Better than anyone.

BLUTARCH MANN
Fifty-eight years old. He was just a kid. I met him in nineteen... sixty, right after the election. He was going on and on, *"how do we get rid of this son-of-a-bitch?"*

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
Er... shall we find you a seat, Mr. Mann?

BLUTARCH MANN
Oh -- yes. I need to sit down.

Blutarch coughs violently into his fist as he is wheeled away. The Smoker rolls his eyes and walks back down the aisle.

He claps Soldier hard on the shoulder as he passes, walking up to the podium next to the coffin.

Blutarch Mann and his Driver sit together in the stands, waiting for the funeral to begin.

BLUTARCH MANN
Funerals are an absolute waste of money.

DRIVER
Like war?

Blutarch side-eyes him.

BLUTARCH MANN
If I couldn’t strike my brother down, I thought God would eventually do it for me -- but I’m no closer to beating Redmond than I was *a hundred years ago!*

Another old man in a wheelchair, wearing a red suit, shuffles over to Blutarch.

REDMOND MANN
Speak of the devil, and he shall appear.

BLUTARCH MANN
I thought I smelled something dead in here!

REDMOND MANN
I’ve just come to offer my condolences, Blutarch.

BLUTARCH MANN
Balderdash! What was <u>MY</u> friend doing in <u>YOUR</u> compound, Redmond?

REDMOND MANN
I don’t know what you’re talking about!

BLUTARCH MANN
He was like the brother I never had! You *slaughtered* him! Admit it!

MURNAU
(on the mic)
Gentlemen.

Redmond and Blutarch shut up and reluctantly sit together, side-eyeing each other. The Funeral Director closes the chapel doors.

THE SMOKER
Thank you all for coming. We are here to honor the memory of Jules Archibald, and his loss, I'm sure, has come as a shock to all of us. Jules carried Builders League for as long as I can remember, and though he's gone, we won't forget the sacrifices he made for this company.

INT. DARK NARROW SPACE - CONTINUOUS 98

Fritz inhales sharply as his eyes snap awake. He's alive.

He lies on his back with his arms by his side. The space he's in is so small, he can barely move.

He can hear somebody talking. He tries to move the weight above him, but it is much too heavy to lift.

That's when he realizes it.

He's inside the coffin.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS 99

THE SMOKER
Of course, with the accolades out of the way, I'm sure you all want to know what happened. As you know, Jules was recently abducted from his home by some kind of underground cult. The rescue operation had gone awry and while myself and my colleague managed to escape, Jules... *died.*

There are murmurs of sorrow and quiet sobbing.

THE SMOKER
Perhaps my colleague could explain what happened.

He locks eyes with Soldier, who’s clearly unimpressed by this whole charade. As he wheels his way up to the podium, the Smoker lowers the microphone.

Soldier looks down at the cue card, reading all the words that the Smoker wrote for him to say.

Then he starts laughing. Wheezing uncontrollably.

The crowd fixate on him, whispering to themselves.

The Smoker glares down at him, seething through the charred leftover skin of his face.

He pushes Soldier back against the wall and takes back the podium.

THE SMOKER
I apologize.

He composes himself and hides his horrific scowl as best as he can.

THE SMOKER
Jules Archibald was murdered.

The crowd gasps.

THE SMOKER
By this man!

He brandishes a large photo of Fritz from his coat pocket and holds it up high for the audience to see.

THE SMOKER
Formerly Doctor Fritz Ludwig. One of our own men. A schizophrenic psychopath and an addict of his own medicine. He also had an addiction for his own patients.

He whips out another photo; A poster of Scout.

THE SMOKER
This boy has been missing since Halloween Night. His mother was found beheaded with a hacksaw.

He pulls out a large snapshot -- a grizzly one that the audience immediately winces at.

REDMOND MANN
Is this really necessary?

THE SMOKER
I am simply illustrating a point that this man was capable of kidnap and murder.

He slaps the photos down on the podium.

THE SMOKER
How did we let this happen?

He points to the coffin.

THE SMOKER
Archibald is dead because we failed him.

INT. COFFIN - CONTINUOUS 100

Confused and aggravated to hear all this, Fritz runs his hands around the dark space for something that could help him. His right hand touches something very familiar. The smooth shape of a weapon he knows all too well.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS 101

BLUTARCH MANN
Did you kill him?

THE SMOKER
...I beg your pardon?

BLUTARCH MANN
Did you kill the bastard or not?

THE SMOKER
No. The coward took his own life.

Soldier’s uncontrollable grin starts to twist into a grimace as he slowly pulls something out from his pocket.

It’s a grenade.

THE SMOKER
Unspeakable crimes! This unbridled act of cruelty against our own company will not go unpunished!

INT. COFFIN - CONTINUOUS 102

Visions of Scout and his mother flash through Fritz’s mind.

His whole body shakes. *He has never been more angry in his entire life.*

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS 103

THE SMOKER
So, in Archibald’s death, and in accordance to his will, I will be taking his place as Chairman of the Board to end this treason and corruption once and for all!

Soldier’s finger shakily tugs at the grenade pin.

AT THAT VERY MOMENT--

FRITZ BURSTS OUT OF THE COFFIN.

The Smoker turns to look. FRITZ FIRES A GUN -- BLOWING HIS HEAD OFF.

The Smoker falls DEAD on the floor. Blood splatters all over the podium, the casket, Soldier, the audience. EVERYBODY SCREAMS and people start running for the exit, toppling over each other.

Fritz climbs out of the casket and falls to the floor, struggling to stand up. He looks out at the mad crowd, stampeding each other for the doors. He walks over to the Smoker’s body and FIRES OFF another shot into his face.

BLUTARCH MANN
(shouting over crowd)
GET ME OUT OF HERE!

Somebody in the crowd pulls out a gun and FIRES AT FRITZ. Without hesitation, Fritz fires back, SHOOTING HIM IN THE HEART.

The Funeral Director GOES DOWN HARD.

Fritz looks back at Soldier -- so dumbfounded he can’t even speak. For a moment, they just stare at each other before Fritz turns and calmly walks down the aisle, stepping over the Funeral Director’s body on the way out.

Soldier just sits there stunned; his mouth hanging open.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS 104

Fritz walks calmly through the panicking crowd all trying to get away.

A familiar black hearse peels out into the road and passes Fritz.

Stunned, Fritz barely notices a BLU company car careen into the street and crash into a parked sedan.

Fritz snaps to attention. A group of BLU mercenaries get out of the car and draw guns. They FIRE at him.

Fritz ducks just in time and takes cover behind a parked truck.

A GRENADE flies through the air and lands in the street.

BOOM! The company car EXPLODES in a fiery wreck, killing all three mercenaries.

Fritz looks back at Soldier, standing in the middle of the street. He throws Fritz the briefcase and runs off without another word.

Fritz reaches out and grabs it, tucking it under his arm as he makes a mad dash down the street in the other direction.

VOICES
STOP HIM! DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY!

Fritz's heart is pounding in his chest. Rounds WHIZ past his ears as armed people in the street shoot at him from a distance.

Fritz spots an alleyway and quickly ducks inside.

INT./EXT. BLUTARCH MANN'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS 105

BLUTARCH MANN
Can't you go any faster?!

LIMO DRIVER
I'm flooring it, sir!

BLUTARCH MANN
They're shooting at us! Run all the red lights! What are they good for anyway? -- *LOOK OUT!*

The limo careens into the path of the black hearse, SMASHING into it and spinning before coming to a stop in the middle of the road. The black hearse doesn’t stop, disappearing down the street.

Blutarch splutters from the back seat. The driver is DEAD, his head SMASHED into the windshield.

Soldier approaches the window across from Blutarch, looking down at his mangled body.

Blutarch looks up at him with sickly blood-shot eyes.

BLUTARCH MANN
(weakly)
Help me.

Soldier pulls out a pistol and SHOOTS Blutarch Mann -- *killing him.*

After a moment of contemplation, he drops the gun and walks away. We never see Soldier again.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS 106

Fritz runs out of the alleyway into the middle of the road. An AMBULANCE SCREECHES to a halt just inches in front of him. The huge grill PUNCHES Fritz in the chest, KNOCKING him to the ground.

Fritz scrambles to his feet and sticks his gun in the driver-side window. The PARAMEDIC inside SCREAMS as Fritz SLAMS his gun into the window, SMASHING the glass.

A POLICE CAR chases Fritz through the alleyway and THREE COPS jump out, drawing their sidearms.

Fritz YANKS the Paramedic through the window and THROWS him on the ground. He points the revolver at his head.

The Paramedic shields himself, raising his hands -- covered in BLUE GLOVES.

CHIEF OF POLICE
YOU! PUT YOUR HANDS UP!

Fritz spins around and sees the three cops -- one of them the Police Chief.

Fritz SHOOTS at them from across the ambulance cab.

BAM! The first bullet misses -- forcing them to get down. They fire back.

BAM! The second HITS one of them in the shoulder. He falls to the ground.

CHIEF OF POLICE
(firing shotgun)
Johnny!

BAM! The third bullet HITS the Police Chief in the face. He falls down DEAD.

Out of bullets, Fritz climbs into the ambulance and GUNS the engine, SCREAMING around the corner. The last cop RUNS after him, BLASTING his gun at the rear doors as the ambulance speeds away.

INT./EXT. BLUTARCH MANN'S LIMO - CONTINUOUS 107

Redmond Mann emerges from the crowd and wheels himself over to the crashed limo. He sees his brother slumped over dead in the backseat.

REDMOND MANN
Good gravel... I *won!* I outlived you, brother! I am the last Mann standing--!

WHAM! The ambulance SCREAMS down the street and SLAMS into Redmond, running him over, leaving nothing but a huge red stain in the road.

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - CONTINUOUS 108

Blood splatters across the windshield. Fritz doesn't react.

He feels nothing. Absolutely nothing.

But then, he feels the presence of something -- or someone -- next to him, watching him from the passenger seat.

Fritz glances to his right. There is no one there.

The ambulance turns the corner and disappears.

CROSSFADE TO

EXT. STREET - THE NEXT DAY 109

A mailman drops a stack of newspapers on the sidewalk.

The headline: ***"MANN BROTHERS ASSASSINATED -- DEADLY FUNERAL ATTACK CLAIMS 9"***

CROSSFADE TO

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT 110

Fritz’s bloodied hands clutch the wheel of the ambulance. He is now dressed in a white shirt and black tie.

He stares at the long desert road ahead. Nothing but darkness lies in front of him.

His eyes slowly droop and close, slipping into unconsciousness. His head slumps forward.

The road becomes darker, until there is nothing but black.

Then, in the distance, a bright light shines over Fritz through the windshield, stirring him awake.

The sounds of the motor and wheels fade away until the ambulance comes to a stop -- as if the vehicle was never moving at all.

EXT. ABANDONED SALOON - CONTINUOUS 111

A little wooden shack appears in Fritz’s vision; the only thing visible in the entire desert.

A neon sign above glows in the night sky: **"DELL’S**".

INT. DELL’S BAR - CONTINUOUS 112

Fritz approaches the saloon doors and swings them open. The Bartender reads a newspaper, obscuring his face.

DELL
You look lost, stranger.

FRITZ
I am.

DELL
Where you headed?

(CONTINUED)

FRITZ
I don’t know.

DELL
Nearest town’s back the other way.

FRITZ
That’s not where I’m going.

DELL
Then where *are* you going?

FRITZ
Do you have a phone?

DELL
Nope.

FRITZ
I’m think I’m going to be sick.

Dell drops a set of keys on the counter.

DELL
Restroom’s back there.

Fritz takes the keys and heads for the door.

Fritz looks past Dell at TWO GUYS in the bar he didn’t see coming in. One leans against a jukebox smoking a cigarette, watching the other play a little black piano.

Fritz unlocks the restroom door and hurries inside.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS 113

Fritz locks the restroom door and moves toward the row of sinks, turning on the water and splashing it in his face.

He stares at himself in the mirror for a long time.

INT. DELL’S BAR - CONTINUOUS 114

Dell lowers the newspaper and turns to face the restroom door.

No eyes.

He takes a black telephone out from under the counter and dials a number, putting the phone to his ear.

INT. RESTROOM - CONTINUOUS 115

Fritz takes out a bottle of BLU VALIUM, half-full of tablets.

Somebody POUNDS the other side of the restroom door.

FRITZ
Gott helfe mir.

Fritz DOWNS the bottle in one gulp. The room begins to spin into a blur of colors and shapes.

He COUGHS blood and spits something into the sink.

Teeth.

Panicked, Fritz rips the fake label off the bottle and drops it into the sink.

Underneath: "**EMESIS DIAZEPAM - 1963".**

He looks up into the mirror. There’s nobody there.

His reflection stands *behind* him. *A man in black...*

A TOILET FLUSHES. A man walks out behind Fritz -- *whistling*.

Fritz slowly turns to his left. The man stands next to him, washing his hands at the sink...

...It’s Jules Archibald.

Fritz just stares at him, perplexed.

Archibald looks up at Fritz, seemingly as confused as he is.

(beat)

He smiles at Fritz -- chuckling -- before leaving the bathroom.

Fritz watches him go, unlocking the bathroom door. Fritz sees something in the doorway off-screen.

SCOUT (O.S.)
Hey Doc.

Fritz smiles.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT 116

Fritz’s bloodshot eyes stare out the smashed windshield of the ambulance -- wrapped around a telephone pole in POURING RAIN. His injuries appear fatal.

The black briefcase lies on the passenger seat. The locks have been cracked apart by the collision. A vibrant red light escapes from within.

The Respawn Core.

We zoom into it. The scene is filled with red light.

Then...

CUT TO:

A multitude of bodies, moving like red blood cells, through the intestinal coils of an infinite black void.

CUT TO:

INT. RESPAWN CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS 117

The entire chamber is ENGULFED IN FLAMES.

The door slides open. Fritz stands inside the Respawn Unit, COVERED HEAD TO TOE IN FIRE.

We hear music: *"Silent Night".*

The fire consumes Fritz, then the entire room.

ROLL CREDITS

FADE IN

A photograph fills the screen.

Fritz and Scout.

Scout DISAPPEARS from the photo, leaving Fritz utterly alone.

CUT TO BLACK